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PHILIPPE DE RIGAUD DE VAUDREUIL

GOVERNOR OF NEW FRANCE

(1703-1725)

by

YVES F. ZOLTVANY

A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and
recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance,
a thesis entitled ...PHILIPPE DE RIGAUD DE VAUDREUIL..
.....GOVERNOR OF NEW FRANCE.....
.....(1703.-1725).....
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ABSTRACT

Because of the nature of available documentation the present dissertation is not a complete biography of Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil. Rather, it is basically a study of his public life between 1687 and 1725.

Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil was born in or near the town of Revel, in the province of Languedoc, in 1643. In 1672 he joined the First Company of Musketeers and seems to have participated in the Dutch and German campaigns of the 1670's and 1680's. He was appointed Commander of the Canadian Troops in 1687 and sailed for the colony that same year. Successively, he became Governor of Montreal in 1699 and Governor-General of Canada in 1703, following the death of Hector de Callières. He held this last position until his own death in 1725.

The character of Vaudreuil's term of office and his contribution to the history of New France during that time can best be understood if they are considered from the point of view of the three great problems that arose during the first quarter of the eighteenth century: the North American phase of the War of the Spanish Succession that lasted from 1702 to 1713; English expansionism, which became a threat of the first magnitude after 1713 on both the eastern and western frontiers of Canada; and finally, the need of a suitable policy for the Great Lakes and Mississippi Valley regions. By a close analysis of those major problems the author hopes to have contributed to the knowledge of the period in at least two ways: first, by exposing the mainsprings of Iroquois policy after 1701, a topic that has never been systematically explored; second, by showing the genesis and development of French North American imperialism and its basically defensive character.

The basic conclusion that emerges from this study is that Vaudreuil provided New France with bold and intelligent leadership during a very difficult period in the colony's history. During ten years of war he kept the Indian tribes at peace and neutralized the Iroquois threat. The policy he elaborated between 1713 and 1725 showed how France might yet close the fissures created in her North American empire by the treaty of Utrecht. Unfortunately, for both the Governor and Canada, these contributions were largely negated because of the insufficient support that was received from the mother country. In the first place, France's material aid was never sufficient to enable Canada to compete on even economic terms with the English colonies for the alliance of the numerous tribes inhabiting the interior of the continent. Secondly, the home authorities failed to provide Vaudreuil with the firm diplomatic support he required to mend the colonial defenses in the post-war years. Largely as a result of France's reluctance to take a firm stand on the North American question, the English colonies registered important commercial and territorial gains at Canada's expense after 1713.

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INTRODUCTION

There have been to date only a few fragmentary studies of Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil. In 1938, F.H. Hammang published the first of an intended two volume biography of this governor of New France.¹ The work is based on fairly broad research in primary source material and is quite sound although two major shortcomings must be underlined. In the first place the author does not succeed in reconstructing Vaudreuil's personality and character. In fact, it soon becomes evident that he is not really writing a biography of Vaudreuil but rather a history of New France during his administration. Secondly, largely because his analysis of Iroquois behavior during the War of the Spanish Succession is weak, he is unable to provide a complete explanation of the policy Vaudreuil adopted toward these Indians between 1703 and 1713. Moreover, as pointed out above, the work is incomplete. After introductory chapters dealing with the ministry of the marine and the colony's internal situation in the early eighteenth century Hammang does not advance beyond an examination of Canada's relations with New York and New England during the War of the Spanish Succession. The question of the West during this period and the entire post-Utrecht era are left untouched.

Since the publication of Hammang's volume the only other studies to appear on Vaudreuil have been two short ones by G. Frégault.

1. F.H. Hammang, The Marquis de Vaudreuil: New France at the Beginning of the Eighteenth Century, (Bruges, 1938), vol. I, passim.

The first appeared in 1952 as chapter I of a study devoted to Pierre de Rigaud de Vaudreuil.² It provides a sketch of the elder Vaudreuil's career from the time of his arrival in Canada in 1687 until his death in 1725. The second, a lengthy article entitled Politique et politiciens au début du XVIIIe siècle, was published in 1961 and devotes several pages³ to an analysis of the opposition which various elements in Canadian society manifested to Vaudreuil's rule in the early years of his administration. Both these works are good and the last one particularly is at times brilliant. Nonetheless they do not fill the real need that exists for a complete study of Vaudreuil's twenty-two year term of office, the longest in the history of New France. It is hoped that the present dissertation will do something to fill this void in the historiography of Canada during the French Régime.

Because of the scant attention Vaudreuil has received from historians in the past his personality has remained something shadowy and uncertain. Unlike such figures as Talon, Frontenac, la Galissonnière, and Montcalm, no image has become associated with his name. Vaudreuil's personality is in fact a difficult one to understand and it is only after a good deal of time and effort that one can hope to succeed in the task. Because he has not received this attention from historians he is usually described as a mediocre or at best an average governor, free no doubt of serious shortcomings but lacking also in those essential qualities that

2. G. Frégault, Le Grand Marquis, Pierre de Rigaud de Vaudreuil et la Louisiane, (Montréal, 1952), pp. 49 - 88.

3. G. Frégault, "Politique et politiciens au début du XVIIIe siècle" Ecrits du Canada français, vol. 11 (1961), pp. 151 - 196.

make a superior administrator. "Qui sont ces administrateurs?" asks L. Groulx. Vaudreuil, his successor Charles de Beauharnois, and of the two intendants Michel Bégon and Gilles Hocquart. "Non, certes, des personnages médiocres, mais des hommes qui ne dépassent jamais la moyenne que modestement. Personnages assez malaisés à définir comme tous les hommes de leur espèce, à qui manquent les qualités maitresses, le relief vigoureux."⁴ Frégault appraises in much the same way the leading Canadian personalities of the early eighteenth century. "La nature des questions qui passionnent alors les esprits" he states, "souligne la médiocrité, déjà constatée, de la plupart des hommes engagés dans la vie publique."⁵

As far as Vaudreuil is concerned explaining such an attitude is not particularly difficult. His dispatches, in comparison with those of such men as Talon and la Galissonnière, which abound in insight and convey grand visions of a future French North American empire, appear dull and uninspired. There is nothing in this long series of factual exposés that holds the attention or captures the imagination. Indeed, no more by education than by temperament was Vaudreuil suited for theorizing on the situation in America or for propounding a philosophy of colonization. His knowledge of America and the manner in which he discharged his duties were not so much the result of a native intelligence as of long years of experience in Canadian affairs. But while one dimension of his personality may well be described as underdeveloped, he was able to compensate for this flaw. One who closely studies his

4. L. Groulx, Histoire du Canada français depuis la découverte, (4 vol., Montréal 1950 - 1952), vol. 2, pp. 27 - 28.

5. G. Frégault, "Politique et politiciens au début du XVIIIe siècle." Ecrits du Canada français, vol. 11 (1961), p. 193.

administration is impressed by the fact that Vaudreuil excelled in the analysis of concrete situations, in penetrating a problem to its core and knowing exactly what had to be done to deal with it. At all times he remains practical, pragmatic and tenacious in his approach to the problems which faced him. These are his three master qualities, and it is in terms of these personality traits that New France was governed during twenty-two years.

Although qualities such as the ones just described do not make for a spectacular administration, the overall impression conveyed by Vaudreuil is not one of mediocrity. The figure which emerges from his correspondence and which stands out in sharp relief is that of a bold and resourceful administrator who managed to govern successfully during a most difficult period in the history of New France. For the greater part of his administration Canada was in the throes of economic depression; France's interest in her North American colony was at an all - time low; the caliber of the ministers of the marine, the supreme arbiters of Canadian destinies, was mediocre and at times worse. With such a minimum of resources both intellectual and material to work with, a man such as Talon would probably have given up in despair and asked to be recalled. Vaudreuil, however, was able to accommodate himself to these realities and to develop a policy which took into full account the meagre resources at the colony's disposal. The result was not a brilliant period in the history of New France but the colonial policy of the mother country during these years hardly made possible the attainment of brilliance.

The present work is not a complete biography of Vaudreuil.

So little is known about his early life in France that all one

can do for this part of his career is to venture a hypothesis on the motives that may have impelled ^{him} to come to Canada. Not a great deal more evidence is available on the sixteen years he spent in the colony before becoming governor-general. For all practical purposes it is only after he attained this post in 1703, when he was already sixty years old, that material becomes sufficiently abundant to allow a detailed study of his career. Even for this period, however, the documents that survive are largely official dispatches and memoirs, with only a few scattered items dealing with private or family affairs. Although the most has been made of this handful of personal papers this dissertation remains essentially a study of Vaudreuil's public life from 1703 to 1725.

In preparing this work, many people and institutions have been of assistance to me. In particular I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Province and University of Alberta. Had it not been for their generous financial aid it would have been impossible for me to undertake studies at the doctoral level and to devote a year to research in Canada and France. In Ottawa, the personnel of the Public Archives of Canada, Pre-Confederation division, and of the Public Archives Library, were unfailingly helpful and obliging. The staffs of the Archives Nationales, Bibliothèque Nationale and Ministère de la Guerre in Paris, of the departmental archives of Haute-Garonne in Toulouse and of Tarn in Albi greatly facilitated my work by researching various points on my behalf. Finally, I would like to thank M. Yves Blaquièrre of Revel, France, who went to a great deal of trouble to supply me with information dealing with the local history of the Rigaud family.

Abbreviations

I Manuscript sources

AC	Archives des colonies.
ADHG	Archives départementales de la Haute-Garonne.
ADT	Archives départementales du Tarn.
AE	Archives du ministère des affaires étrangères.
AM	Archives de la marine.
AN	Archives nationales.
ASQ	Archives du Séminaire de Québec.
BN	Bibliothèque nationale.
PAC	Public Archives of Canada.

II Printed primary sources

Coll. Mss. N. F.	Collections de manuscrits contenant lettres, mémoires et autres documents historiques relatifs à la Nouvelle-France.
CSPA	Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West Indies.
JRAD	Thwaites, R.G., ed. The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents.
MPHC	Collections and Researches Made by the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society.
NYCD	Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New York.
RAPQ	Rapports de l'Archiviste de la Province de Québec.
Wraxall	McIlwain, C.H., ed. An abridgement of the Indian Affairs Contained in Four Folio Volumes transacted in the colony of New York from the year 1678 to the year 1751, by Peter Wraxall.

III Periodicals

- BRH Bulletin des Recherches historiques.
- RHAF Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française.

CHAPTER I

The Background of Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil

The origins of the house of de Rigaud de Vaudreuil are shrouded in the mists of the early Middle Ages. The name Rigaud first appears in history in the year 879 and genealogists can trace the family descendants uninterruptedly from 1249 onwards.¹ The barony of Vaudreuil, located in the sénéchaussée of Lauragais, near Toulouse, had come into their possession in the year 1189 when the fief thus named was conveyed to Bernard Rigaud by his wife Anne Adhémar.² The acquisition of this large tract of land, which covered 1,061 hectares of mountainous country, laid the cornerstone of the family fortunes. The Rigauds became the most powerful family in the district of Lauragais, a position which they maintained until the Revolution of 1789.³ As more domains accrued to them by marriage and contract their reputation spread beyond the limits of their province. By the early fifteenth century, when Alzéas Rigaud was lieutenant-general of Dauphiné and seigneur of

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1. For the Vaudreuil genealogy see De la Chenaye-Desbois et Badier, Dictionnaire de la noblesse (19 volumes, Paris, 1872), volume 17, pp. 78 - 91; D'Hozier, Armorial général de France (8 volumes, Paris, 1736 - 1768), volume 6, section Vaudreuil.
 2. L. Dutil, La Haute-Garonne et sa région, géographie historique, (2 volumes, Toulouse, 1929), volume 2, p. 286.
 3. J. Ramière de Fortanier, Les droits seigneuriaux dans la sénéschaussée et comté de Lauragais, 1553 - 1789, (Toulouse, 1932), p. 356.

twenty estates, the family had reached the peak of its power.⁴ But as these domains were successively alienated the Rigauds entered a long period of decline.⁵ Although they were not impoverished by the middle of the seventeenth century they had long ceased to play a role on the national scene. Nonetheless they could still take pride in their name, one of the oldest in the province of Languedoc, in their local prestige, and in their 450 year old title to the barony of Vaudreuil. It was in this family of ancient provincial nobility that Philippe was born in 1643,⁶ one of twelve children and the youngest of five sons.

The seventeenth century was a difficult period for the noblesse ancienne. The fixed income this class derived from its landed estates was no longer sufficient to make ends meet in a world transformed by the price revolution. Indeed, it may well have been the search for liquid assets that prompted the Rigauds, like so many other noble families during this period, to sell the bulk of their domains. Those years were also difficult ones politically. Fearful of the reactionary and particularist tendencies of the feudal nobility, which had manifested themselves during the religious wars, on the morrow of the death of Henri IV, and during the Fronde, the monarchy was beating it back from positions of political responsibility. Positions in the central government and

4. De la Chenaye-Desbois et Badier, op. cit., vol. 17, p. 79.

5. By the time of the Revolution the Rigauds retained possession of only three domains. J. Ramière de Fortanier, op. cit., p. 356.

6. 1643 is given as Vaudreuil's date of birth in his personal dossier, AM, C 7, vol. 340. Because the parish registers of the commune of Vaudreuille only begin in 1648 the certificate of birth itself appears to have been lost.

in the provincial administration were increasingly filled by members of the bourgeoisie, persons who owed their preeminence to the royal will and who could be relied upon to serve it faithfully and well. The process of transforming France into a bureaucratic state, masterfully begun by Cardinal Richelieu, was brought to a successful conclusion by Louis XIV. Although one of the principal effects of this process was to deprive the feudal nobility of the political importance it had formerly enjoyed, this class continued to play an important role in national life. The kings of France, and Louis XIV particularly, believed it their divinely ordained duty to maintain in their immunities and obligations the various groups and classes that constituted the nation's sharply hierarchised society.⁷ Thus, while the feudal nobility was no longer represented in the King's council, now dominated by such men as the Le Telliers and Colberts, it quickly monopolized two other fields, the army and the Church.⁸ These were set aside almost as the special preserves of the great nobility, and this class soon acquired a vested interest in Church benefices and in the upper echelons of the officer corps. But here again the situation reflected rather than overrode the cleavage existing in the territorial nobility itself. Since all commissions above that of lieutenant had to be bought, members of the provincial squirearchy such as the Vaudreuils, found it extremely difficult to gain promotions.⁹

7. This point is well developed by M. Beloff, The Age of Absolutism 1660 - 1815 (New York, 1962), pp. 46 - 76.

8. P. Sagnac, La Formation de la société française moderne (2 vol., Paris, 1945), vol. I, pp. 25 - 37.

9. M. Beloff, op. cit., p. 61.

The position of the feudal nobility was further complicated by the laws governing inheritance. As a result of the droit d'aînesse, or primogeniture, family estates were not subdivided but transmitted, almost in their entirety, to the eldest son. The younger sons, or cadets, were reduced to a sorry plight by this practice. Unlike their counterparts in England they could not engage in commerce, business or industry without forfeiting their noble status. By education, they were prepared for little outside of waging war. Frequently these impoverished noblemen would drift to the cities where they lived in hand-to-mouth fashion. It was not uncommon for the swarm of cadets dwelling in Paris to resort to fraud in their desperate search for funds. The situation there was so bad in 1624 that the Parlement forbade the lending of money to members of this group.¹⁰ When the various problems facing the feudal nobility in the seventeenth century are considered, it becomes evident that Vaudreuil was not born under favorable auspices. He belonged to one of the less favoured classes, the provincial squirearchy, and he was also cadet de famille. Creating a satisfactory career for himself under such circumstances was sure to prove difficult.

Because of an absence of documents, practically nothing is known of Vaudreuil's early years. His education, however, appears to have been extremely superficial. The innumerable spelling mistakes and crude handwriting which characterize the one surviving letter in the governor's own hand¹¹ seem to indicate

10. R. Mandrou, Introduction à la France moderne (1500 - 1640), Essai de psychologie historique, (Paris, 1961), p. 148.

11. Vaudreuil au ministre, 26 décembre 1698, BN, Clairambault, vol. 873, pp. 359 - 360.

that he was only a few steps removed from illiteracy. At no time does he appear to have taken any interest in cultural pursuits. After his death a mere handful of books of a popular or devotional nature were discovered among his belongings.¹² On one occasion the intendant Jacques Raudot described Vaudreuil as ignorant in everything which did not pertain to military matters.¹³ Indeed, by temperament and training, Vaudreuil was and always remained primarily a soldier. In these respects he was largely typical of his class, although he does compare unfavorably with such governors of New France as Frontenac, Callières and the erudite la Galissonnière.

In 1672, at the age of 29, Philippe followed the example of two of his brothers, Arnaud, the eldest, and Philippe I,¹⁴ and entered the army.¹⁵ The two other brothers, Antoine and François-Aimé, had chosen the Church.¹⁶ The careers of the latter two, perhaps because they were undistinguished, are obscure; but the case is different where the others are concerned for both occupied prominent positions in two of France's outstanding regiments.

12. The titles of these books are of interest. They were: Nouvelle description de la France by Piganiol de la Force, Géographie historique ou description de l'univers; Voyages et aventures de François le Gate; Vie et aventures de Robinson Crusoé; Epîtres et Evangiles pour toute l'année. Inventaire et description des biens de Vaudreuil, RAPQ 1921 - 1922, p. 248.

13. J. Raudot au ministre, 20 septembre 1709, AC, C 11 A, vol. 30, p. 206.

14. Two of the brothers bore the same name, Philippe. To distinguish the governor of New France from his elder brother the latter will be referred to as Philippe I.

15. AM, C 7, vol. 340, dossier Vaudreuil.

16. On the careers of the five brothers, see d'Hozier, op. cit., vol. 6, section Vaudreuil, pp. 37 - 41.

Arnaud became captain of a company of chevau - légers (The King's Light Horse) in 1667. Philippe I entered the first company of mousquetaires royaux (The Musketeers) as maréchal des logis, and ultimately rose to the rank of captain with the Gardes françaises (The French Guard).

Philippe himself elected to serve with the first company of Musketeers. This corps, like the King's Light Horse and the French Guard, was attached to the royal household. The first company had been created by Louis XIII in 1622 and a second was organized by Louis XIV at the beginning of his reign. Each numbered 500 men, all noblemen or soldiers of proven merit. They served as part of the royal escort in time of peace, as shock troops in time of war, and also as a sort of military school where the young nobility received its training in the art of waging war. Because of the reputation acquired by the Musketeers, high ranking officers in the regular regiments of cavalry and infantry were frequently recruited from their ranks.¹⁷ Philippe would serve fifteen years with this company but unlike his brothers the highest rank he ever attained was the very subordinate one of brigadier.¹⁸

The presence of three sons in the army seems to be the key to

17. On the Musketeers see, the following works: M. Boullier, Histoire des divers corps de la maison militaire des Rois de France (Paris, 1818); "Le Thueux", Essais historiques sur les deux compagnies de mousquetaires du Roi de France supprimées le 1er janvier 1776 (2 vol., la Haye, 1778); See especially S. Lamoral le Pippre de Noeufville, Abrégé chronologique et historique de l'origine, du progrès et de l'état actuel de la maison du Roy et de toutes les troupes de France. (3 vol. Liège, 1734) vol. 2, pp. 129 - 274.

18. Rolles des officiers qui servent en Canada avec le temps de leur service, s.d., AC, D 2 C, vol. 47, p. 51, p. 58, p. 85, p. 90, p. 152.

the financial difficulties which beset the family in the second half of the seventeenth century. Officers led expensive lives during this period and had to pay out large amounts to gain promotions. Favoured by his droit d'ainesse Arnaud was by far in the best position to undertake a military career. The father, Jean-Louis, had left him considerable wealth by two donationes inter vivos of April 14, 1628, and September 26, 1653.¹⁹ Upon the death of his father in 1659 more of the family's possessions accrued to him by virtue of the substitution clause his great uncles had inserted in their wills.²⁰ Already at this time Arnaud was spending lavishly. According to Philippe it was his brother's wife, Antoinette de Colombet, who was responsible for this prodigality and there is some semblance of truth in this accusation.²¹ By 1678 Arnaud must have been deeply in debt for seizures were then being operated on some of his estates.²² By the 1680's the most important holdings of the house of Vaudreuil were in the possession of a dame Talon, a Huguenot residing in Holland, who used these estates to satisfy the claims of her own creditors. Thus, in 1686, she sold the fief known as Cavanial to Pierre Chabert, French consul in Holland, for 75,000 livres.²³

19. Factum pour Philippe de Rigaud contre Arnaud de Rigaud et Antoinette de Colombet, s.d., BN, Clairambault, vol. 1103, p. 145.

20. Ibid., p. 146v.

21. Ibid., pp. 146 - 146v.

22. Factum... poursuivant la mise en vente des terres saisies sur Arnaud de Rigaud, baron de Vaudreuil, s.d., ADT, E, vol. 299, p. 375.

23. Factum pour Philippe de Rigaud contre Arnaud de Rigaud et Antoinette de Colombet, s.d., BN, Clairambault, vol. 1103, p. 146.

Far less favoured than his eldest brother, Philippe I began his military career as maréchal des logis. He was determined to rise, however, even at the expense of Arnaud's fortune if necessary. With Antoinette de Colombet's helping hand he found it possible to accede to a higher post. This woman had obtained a separation from her husband and gone to Paris to live with Philippe I.²⁴ By methods unknown she persuaded Arnaud and the three other brothers to renounce in his favour their share in the Vaudreuil estate. For 78,000 livres, representing only a part of the sum thus secured, Philippe I purchased his captaincy with the French Guard.²⁵ Antoinette had also recovered her dowry, valued at 115,000 livres, at the time of her separation from Arnaud and in 1678 she willed this sum to Philippe I. In return, the latter named her the universal legatee to the Vaudreuil estate.²⁶ This set the stage for Philippe's legal battle with his sister-in-law in the 1690's and 1700's.

In these years when Philippe I, by questionable practices, managed to climb several rungs in the ladder of the French military hierarchy, Philippe served obscurely with the Musketeers. Very little is known of him during this period - indeed he was hardly important enough to warrant much attention. Nonetheless

24. Ibid., p. 146v.

25. Loc. cit.

26. Donation mutuelle entre Antoinette de Colombet et Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, 21 juin 1678, AN, Y [Châtelet de Paris], vol. 234, pp. 413v - 414.

it is possible to account partially for his movements.²⁷ When he joined the Musketeers, war with Holland was just breaking out and his company was dispatched to Flanders. From 1672 to 1678 the Musketeers were involved in several pitched battles and their behaviour on these occasions, and especially at Maestricht, Condé, Valenciennes, and Ypres, spread their fame throughout France. According to F.X. Charlevoix, it was the part he played in the attack on Valenciennes in 1677 that earned Vaudreuil the King's favour.²⁸ Noeufville for his part mentions the courage displayed by "Monsieur le chevalier de Vaubreuil [sic] mousquetaire" at Ypres in 1678.²⁹ Should this be a reference to Vaudreuil, as it almost certainly appears to be, it would indicate that he was still waiting for his first promotion after six years in the service. It may have been as a result of this action that he was raised to the rank of brigadier which he held in 1687. During the German campaigns of the 1680's he also served for some time as aide de camp.³⁰ Thus, by the time he left for Canada, he was

27. Vaudreuil once stated that in Europe he had served under the marquis de Maupertuis and the maréchaux de Noailles and de Choiseul. Maupertuis had been associated with the Musketeers since 1661 and became commanding officer of the first company in 1684. Noeufville, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 156 - 159. He probably served under Noailles in 1683, when the Musketeers joined his army near Besançon. Noeufville, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 274. It has been impossible to determine at what moment he may have served under Choiseul. BN, Clairambault, vol. 873, pp. 359 - 360.

28. F.X. Charlevoix, Histoire de la Nouvelle France, vol. 2, p. 288. Contemporary accounts of the attack, however, make no mention of Vaudreuil and the King's favour is certainly not very evident in his career until some years after his arrival in Canada.

29. Lamoral le Pippre de Noeufville, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 273.

30. Commission de capitaine de vaisseau pour le sr. de Vaudreuil, 5 mai 1695, AC, B, vol. 17, p. 242.

a tested veteran of several European campaigns.

Everything indicates that Vaudreuil, during his fifteen years with the Musketeers, had served well and even at times with distinction. But he had little to show for all this. He was penniless³¹ and prospects for advancement were dim. It was probably in an effort to better his lot that he cast his eyes toward Canada in 1687. To a professional soldier such as he, this colony must have appeared as a good place to serve. The war with the Iroquois was at its height and several contingents of troops were being sent over to help contain those Indians. In order to maintain this growing body of soldiers in good discipline and exercise them regularly, the court had just created a new position, that of Commander of the troops.³² With his fifteen years of military experience, Vaudreuil appeared well qualified to carry out these duties and he received the commission. Admittedly the position was a minor one and the salary was small.³³ From the very outset, however, the Court considered that Vaudreuil qualified for greater things. Before he even set foot in the colony, for instance, governor Denonville was advised to choose between Vaudreuil and the governor of Montreal, Hector de Callières, to command in the colony in case of his own absence.³⁴ How this obscure brigadier

31. The theme of Vaudreuil's poverty is a constant one in the dispatches to the Court. See Denonville au ministre, 28 octobre 1687, AC, C 11 A, vol. 9, pp. 147 - 147v.

32. For an outline of the duties of the commandant des troupes see le ministre à Ramezay, 30 mai 1699, AC, B, vol. 20, p. 252.

33. The salary was 1,500 livres. Champigny au ministre, 5 novembre 1687, AC, C 11 A, vol. 9, p. 197.

34. Le ministre à Denonville, 30 mars 1686 [sic], AC, B, vol. 13, p. 172.

came to recommend himself to the ministry of the marine as capable of discharging the duties of governor-general of Canada is one of the great riddles of his early career. The nature of his position in France could hardly have provided him with the opportunity to show his talents as an administrator and military leader. Nor is the hypothesis of protection at court as plausible as it might appear at first sight. Had Vaudreuil enjoyed such protection it must be accounted strange that it did not manifest itself in other ways before that date. But wherever the explanation lies, the special consideration accorded to Vaudreuil on the eve of his departure for Canada was of fundamental importance. It meant that he was beginning his new career near the top rather than at the bottom of the colony's governing hierarchy.

When Vaudreuil left for Canada in 1687, his character and outlook had already been shaped to a large extent by his noble birth and those difficult years with the Musketeers. Thus, he would always consider it a point of honour to recover, in the name of the family, the full possession of the ancestral barony and to relieve it of the mortgages and taxes weighing down on it. His background is also evident in the attitude he would later adopt toward his sons. He seems to have decided that they should never suffer the fate of obscurity and near poverty that had been his for so long and, by word and deed, he would do everything in his power to assure their rise in the King's service. But while Vaudreuil was deeply marked by his years in France, the Canadian environment in which he was now entering was also destined to have profound effects on his personality.

CHAPTER II

The Formative Years

The colony in which Vaudreuil landed in the spring of 1687 was still struggling for survival some eighty years after its foundation. It numbered approximately 11,000 inhabitants concentrated for the most part on the shores of the St. Lawrence River between Montreal and Quebec. Since approximately 1684 this population had been involved in a conflict with the formidable Five Nation Iroquois Confederacy, which would soon develop into a life and death struggle. In alliance with the Dutch and English merchants of Albany, these Indians were attempting to wrest from the French the control of the Western fur trade. Until 1696 New France and her Indian allies suffered enormously from repeated Iroquois inroads. Many inhabitants were killed; agriculture was retarded, particularly in the district of Montreal; the economy in general suffered from the fact that colonial energies had to be devoted mainly to the task of prosecuting the war effort.

France's colonial policy during this period also had a depressive effect on the economy. Between 1661 and 1672 the mother country had made a considerable effort to develop her North American colony. Immigration had been encouraged; important sums had been invested in nascent industries. Subsequently, European wars had turned the attention of France to other fields and brought this era of promise to an end. Although the King continued to encourage ventures into fishing and lumbering with small subsidies,

the colony now had to fare as best it could largely on its own. This reduced financial aid had an important effect on Canadian life. Sectors of the economy, such as shipbuilding and ironworks, which required heavy capital investment, could no longer be properly developed. The colony was now obliged to rely increasingly on the fur trade, which required a small capital outlay and promised quick returns. The system inaugurated in 1675 made this commerce all the more attractive. In that year, a group of French financiers known as the Company of the Farm was granted a monopoly on the purchase and sale of beaver pelts and moose hides. As one of the conditions of this grant it was understood that the monopolists would purchase, at a fixed price and irrespective of market demands, all the beaver brought to its Canadian stores. The ministry of the marine may have hoped that by this method the colony would obtain the capital the French government could no longer supply. If such was the case these hopes were deceived, for the system simply encouraged the Canadians to turn massively to the beaver trade. The Iroquois war increased the tempo of this trade instead of slowing it down, for it enabled governor Frontenac to send large trading parties into the West under pretext of military necessity.¹ As a result, beaver pelts poured into France at a rate far exceeding that of demand. By the early 1690's the market was showing signs of saturation; by 1700 it had collapsed completely and the colony was plunged into the gravest crisis of its history. The merchant community, whose fortunes were tied in

1. W.J. Eccles, Frontenac, the Courtier Governor, (Toronto, 1959), p. 340.

too exclusively with the beaver trade, was on the verge of bankruptcy. For approximately eight years, commerce came to an almost complete standstill.²

The crisis which afflicted Canada during these years showed that the colony could not develop in a satisfactory manner on a basis as narrow as the beaver trade. But the fact that it was proving so difficult to broaden this basis was not only due to France's restricted financial aid. It was also indicative of the weakness of Canadian society itself. Indeed, for the greater part of the French Régime, there existed a reciprocal and depressive relationship between economy and society in Canada. The economy could not be developed adequately because society lacked the necessary resources; society, in turn, could not grow prosperous on account of the weakness of its economic foundations. Only after the treaty of Utrecht in 1713, when France increased her financial aid, did it become possible for the colony to escape from this vicious circle.

Ascertaining the causes of the weakness of Canadian society is a difficult matter which lies beyond the scope of this study. In order to situate Vaudreuil in his new surroundings, however, a few observations on New France's social structures are necessary. In this respect, the process which sent Vaudreuil to the colonies can serve as a useful starting point. The immigration of younger sons of noble families to the colonies was a fairly common occurrence in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As a result of

2. The lowest point in the crisis was reached in 1703 when only one merchant ship came to Canada. Beauharnois au ministre, 16 novembre 1703, AC, C 11 A, vol. 21, p. 107v.

this social phenomenon there emerged in Canada an élite possessing a fine military tradition but no personal fortune or experience in commerce and industry. To make ends meet, this group engaged in the fur trade, an occupation open to the Canadian nobility despite its mercantile character, and fought for the few and poorly remunerated openings that occurred in the officer corps of the troupes de la marine. The dispatches of the governors are always full of recommendations and demands for promotions, pensions, and gratifications to relieve the plight of any number of poverty-stricken officers. The ostentatious ways of these colonial noblemen, depicted by la Hontan,³ represented an additional drain on their meagre resources.

Immediately below the colonial nobility came the middle class, a fluid group consisting of the colonial merchants and of a smattering of notaries and government employees. This class may have owed its origins to seasonal traders, or forains, who decided to take up residence in the colony instead of returning to France at the end of the trading season.⁴ It was from this group, strongly Canadian in character, that were recruited the judges of the district courts of Montreal, Three Rivers, and Quebec, and the members of the Superior Council, the Canadian version of the French parlements. Through their domination of the judiciary the Canadian middle class could do something to protect its interests. It could not, however, influence events and economic conditions

3. Abrégé des Mémoires de l'Amérique Septentrionale, AC, C 11 E, vol. 13, p. 67v.

4. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 14 octobre 1719, AC, C 11 A, vol. 40, p. 88.

to the same extent as their counterparts in the English colonies through the medium of the popular assemblies. The Canadian merchants were also hindered by their limited financial means.⁵

Because they could not afford their own fleet of ships they were forced to depend on vessels coming from France for the transportation of their wares.⁶ Like the Canadian nobility the merchants relied largely on government subsidies and appear to have been quite lethargic when these were not forthcoming. Jerome de Pontchartrain, minister of the marine from 1698 to 1715, was frequently annoyed by their lack of initiative.⁷

Pontchartrain's social philosophy, unfortunately, was not designed to help matters. In his scale of values the agrarian class was easily the most important social element. "Les gens de la campagne," he once told the Raudots, "sont plus nécessaires pour augmenter et soutenir la colonie que les marchands des villes dont la plupart abandonnent le pays quand ils sont enrichis et qui par le désir qu'ils ont de revenir en France mettent en usage tous les mauvais moyens qui ont fait jusqu'à présent tant de tort à la colonie."⁸ This attitude of distrust toward the moneyed elements of society was not unique to Pontchartrain but had deep roots in the French mind. In 1692, for instance, an anonymous writer

5. J. Hamelin, Economie et société en Nouvelle-France (Cahiers de l'Institut d'Histoire de l'Université Laval, Québec, 1960), p. 136.

6. A.D. Raudot au ministre, 18 octobre 1705, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, pp. 293 - 293v; A.D. Raudot au ministre, 19 octobre 1705, Ibid., pp. 309v - 310.

7. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Raudot, 30 juin 1707, AC, B, vol. 29, p. 45.

8. Le ministre à Raudot, 6 juillet 1709, AC, B, vol. 30, p. 142.

submitted a project for the formation of a company to exploit the western posts. Although his suggestions were not put into execution it is interesting to note the limited role which the author assigned to the middle class in the proposed company:

On seroit obligé de recevoir tous ceux qui se présenteroient pour telles sommes qu'ils voudroient fournir en préférant cependant les plus pauvres aux plus riches de manière que s'il se trouvoit plus d'argent qu'il ne seroit nécessaire pour les fonds de ce commerce on en rembourseroit une partie à ceux qui y auroient les plus grosses sommes pour prendre les petites que les pauvres habitans y voudroient mettre et cela afin que le bénéfice de ce commerce ne tombât pas entre les mains de quelques particuliers seulement mais qu'il fut répandu en celles du publicq.⁹

Such an ideology which favoured the poor to the rich and public to private welfare was hardly conducive to the formation of a well-established, moneyed middle class.

Last on the social scale came the habitants, artisans and journeymen, always in insufficient numbers as a result of an inadequate immigration policy. Under Pontchartrain, immigration was based on freedom of choice and was categorically opposed to the concepts of penal colony and forced immigration. On one occasion, for example, the minister learned that the sr. de la Boularderie had forced someone to emigrate to Acadia. His reaction was immediate and violent. Abruptly, he asked la Boularderie "de quel droit vous avez mené en ce pays là des vauriens malgré eux et vous sçavez que ce n'est pas l'intention du Roy que les colonies servent

9. Poste du Détroit, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 12, p. 152.

de punition."¹⁰ Such an attitude, while in keeping with Pontchartrain's humanitarian philosophy, involved serious drawbacks since Canada's insufficient labor force acted as yet another check on the growth of agriculture and industry. The lure of the fur trade, by drawing many inhabitants away from the farm and into the woods, made Canada's manpower shortage still more acute.

The fur trade and the presence of the nearby frontier had a profound effect on Canadian society. These two factors resulted in the formation of a new social group known as the coureurs de bois. Purely a product of the Canadian environment, it recruited its members from every walk of life¹¹ and introduced an egalitarian element into Canadian society. The fact also that men could withdraw into the wilderness and defy the governing bodies if they felt so inclined made them indocile and even resentful of authority. Many observers were struck by the differences between the mentality of the habitant and of the French censitaire. Louvigny, lieutenant de Roi in the district of Quebec, described the Canadians as "peu soumis et ennemis de l'obéissance."¹² Jacques Raudot, used to the regulated ways of French society, was shocked by what he described as the "caractère dur et féroce" of the inhabitants. He attributed this to Indian influence on Canadian life. Parents were not sufficiently firm with their offspring, he complained. The latter, like those of the Indians, were reared

10. Le ministre à de la Boularderie, 28 février 1708, AC, B, vol. 29, p. 10.

11. [D. Riverin], Mémoire historique... sur les mauvais effets de la réunion des castors dans une mesme main, 1705, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, p. 362v.

12. Louvigny au ministre, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 25, pp. 20 - 20v.

in an undisciplined atmosphere and, as a result, lacked respect for their betters, whether they represented the civil or religious authority.¹³ The old intendant, it is true, was inclined to exaggerate. Nonetheless, his observations show quite well that Canadian society in the early eighteenth century already differed considerably from the French. Stepping from one into the other was not easy and not everyone succeeded in adapting himself to his new surroundings.

Like any other human association, Canadian society under the French régime was a product of heredity and environment. Like the French society of which it was issued it was stratified. Innumerable quarrels of precedence show that individuals were prepared to fight for the honors and marks of distinction attaching to their class. Unlike French society, which was hardening into a caste system as the reign of Louis XIV wore on, Canadian society always embodied a great deal of mobility. Everyone engaged in the fur trade; anyone, whether nobleman, merchant, or habitant, could become a seigneur; with few exceptions, no one was very rich. On such a fluid basis it was impossible for class antagonisms to develop as they frequently did in France and in the English colonies to the South. In-groups and out-groups did nonetheless exist and resounding quarrels frequently broke out between them. In-groups can usually be identified as those which had succeeded in tying themselves to the governor and intendant; out-groups as those excluded from official favour. In a society whose economic life was almost completely controlled by the State little could be

13. J. Raudot au ministre, 10 novembre 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 26, pp. 167 - 167v.

achieved without the support and favour of those who exercised this control at the administrative level. The governor recommended for promotions in the army, distributed the trading permits, appointed the commanders of the western posts. The intendant prepared the budget, recommended for subsidies, contracted for various public works. Patronage formed the basis of political alignments under the French Régime. Changes in high government personnel were often followed in short order by the displacement of one in-group by another.

Vaudreuil arrived in Canada towards the end of May, 1687. The vessel l'Arc en Ciel aboard which he had taken passage had performed the Atlantic crossing in the record time of thirty-two days and three other ships followed close behind with eight hundred recruits for the colonial troops. Denonville was then making final preparations to strike what he hoped would be a crushing blow at the Senecas. Although the recruits had arrived too late to be of any use Vaudreuil, apparently intent on giving a good account of himself, insisted on participating in the campaign. Despite the fatigues of the sea voyage, and without even waiting for his baggage to be brought ashore, he set out for Montreal with the intendant Champigny on May 31.¹⁴ In view of his eagerness, the governor's decision must have come as something of a blow. The new commander of the troops was to remain behind, oversee the building of stockades, and generally guard the colony against the always present possibility of a surprise attack. The former Musketeer may have considered these duties as somewhat beneath him

14. Champigny au ministre, 16 juillet 1687, AC, C 11 A, vol. 9, p. 32v.

and so argued with Denonville, for the latter reconsidered his decision. When the army set out on June 11 Vaudreuil accompanied it at the head of 832 troupes de la marine.¹⁵

The expedition provided few opportunities for heroics. Except for one skirmish the Senecas refused to give battle and the French advanced unopposed far into their land which they systematically plundered and burned. Nonetheless the experience served as a vivid introduction to the methods and hardships of North American warfare. Vaudreuil experienced the backbreaking obstacles of forest and rapids which continually hindered the progress of the advancing army; he rubbed elbows with the militia units composed of the basic elements of Canadian society, seigneurs, habitants, and coureurs de bois; finally, he was able to gain some insight into the character of the Indian allies who, after the sole skirmish of the campaign, carved up the bodies of the dead Senecas like so much cattle and drank their blood.¹⁶ Denonville himself was highly satisfied with Vaudreuil's conduct. In his thirty years of service, he informed the court, he had never experienced anything to match this campaign for sheer toil and fatigue. "Aussi vous puis-je dire que sans M^{rs}. de Callières et Vaudreuil je n'y aurois pu fournir. Je ne me saurois trop louer de leur application."¹⁷ A few months later Denonville wrote a special letter to the court stressing Vaudreuil's poverty and asking the minister to grant him some sort of financial assistance.¹⁸ Champigny fully concurred

15. Mémoire du voyage pour l'entreprise de M. le marquis de Denonville... octobre 1687, Ibid., pp. 106 - 106v.

16. Denonville au ministre, 25 août 1687, Ibid., pp. 67v - 68v.

17. Ibid., p. 68v.

18. Denonville au ministre, 28 octobre 1687, Ibid., pp. 147 - 147v.

with the governor. After praising Vaudreuil's "très grands services" he pointed out that his salary was hardly sufficient to cover the expenses his rank and responsibilities obliged him to incur.¹⁹ The court reacted favorably to these demands and granted the Commander of the Troops a gratification of 500 livres annually.²⁰

There was to be little rest for Vaudreuil during his first year in the colony. He had just returned from the Seneca campaign when he was placed in charge of a detachment of 120 coureurs who had been reduced to idleness by the numerous Iroquois parties lurking along the Ottawa River, the great highway into the interior. The duties of this unit, as described in official dispatches, consisted of guarding Montreal against Iroquois attacks during the winter months, but an unstated purpose may also have been to keep this unruly lot out of mischief. As soon as Iroquois pressure on the Ottawa slackened the unit was dissolved and the coureurs proceeded up-country to bring back the stock of beaver pelts that had accumulated at Michilimackinac.²¹

In 1688, when Hector de Callières went to France to promote Denonville's plan for an attack on New York, Vaudreuil replaced him as governor of Montreal and was thus presented with his first opportunity to prove his talents as an administrator. The position was one of high responsibility, for Montreal, more than any other part of the colony, was exposed to Iroquois attack. The manner in

19. Champigny au ministre, 5 novembre 1687, Ibid., p. 197.

20. Mémoire du Roy à Denonville et Champigny, s.d., AC, B, vol. 15, pp. 19v - 20.

21. Denonville et Champigny au ministre, 6 novembre 1688, AC, C 11 A, vol. 10, p. 4v.

which Vaudreuil handled his duties on this occasion shows clearly that he still had a great deal to learn before becoming as good an administrator as he was a soldier. There being a lull in hostilities he allowed the inhabitants to return to their farms instead of obliging them to remain close to the forts for protection.²² The consequences were catastrophic. Early in the morning of August 6, 1689, 1,500 Iroquois fell upon the settlement of Lachine to begin the most famous massacre in Canadian history. Some hours after the tragedy, the sr. de Subercase arrived on the scene with three hundred men. He was told that the Iroquois, who had uncovered large quantities of brandy in the houses of the settlement, were lying about in a state of drunken stupor at a point one and a half miles removed. Subercase had just begun to lead his men into the woods which lay between him and the enemy when the order to halt rang out from the rear. It was Vaudreuil, who told Subercase "qu'il avoit ordre de ne rien risquer et qu'il falloit retrancher".²³ Hot words were exchanged but there was no other choice than to retreat to fort Rolland, one of three stockades built in the vicinity.

The following day a detachment of fifty French and thirty Indians under the command of the Rabeyre attempted to reinforce fort Rolland. As they approached the stockade they were set upon

22. Gédéon de Catalogne, *Recueil de ce qui s'est passé au Canada au sujet de la guerre tant des Anglois que des Iroquois depuis l'année 1682*, edited by R. LeBlant, *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France. Les Sources narratives au début du XVIIIe siècle*, (Dax, s.d.), p. 199. [Henceforth referred to as *Recueil de ce qui s'est passé... LeBlant, ed.*]

23. *Ibid.*, p. 201.

and cut to pieces by a group of Iroquois who had been lying in ambush. The action was clearly visible from the fort, although it took place out of musket range, and a group of officers asked to be permitted to rescue de Rabeyre and possibly catch the Iroquois in a crossfire. Once again Vaudreuil refused "retenu par les ordres précis dont il estoit chargé."²⁴ As a result of his decision the garrison stood by as helpless spectators while Rabeyre's men were either slain or taken into captivity.

Vaudreuil's behaviour on the occasion of the massacre is instructive. His training as a subordinate officer is clearly evident in his insistence on interpreting literally Denonville's orders to remain on the defensive. Someone in the habit of taking decisions and assuming responsibility for them would surely have capitalized on the unique opportunities with which Vaudreuil had been presented to inflict heavy losses on the Iroquois. The Commander of the Troops, it must be said, was not criticized for his behaviour. He had punctually if unimaginatively executed Denonville's orders and the episode did not harm his reputation in any way. Moreover, with Iroquois attacks increasing in frequency and violence, he would soon be presented with other opportunities to prove his worth.

During the early 1690's the Five Nations held the upper hand in their struggle with the French and were pressing their advantage. In 1691 they fanned out in small parties from Repentigny to the Richelieu, burning houses and preventing the inhabitants from

24. Observation sur l'estat des affaires du Canada au départ des vaisseaux le 18 novembre 1689, AC, C 11 A, vol. 10, p. 321; for a highly critical account of Vaudreuil's conduct on this occasion see abbé Belmont, Histoire du Canada in Collection de mémoires et de relations sur l'histoire ancienne du Canada, published by La Société littéraire et historique de Québec, (Québec, 1840), pp. 29 - 30.

working their fields. With supplies in the colony beginning to run low, Vaudreuil took it upon himself to relieve some of the pressure on Montreal. Coming down from Quebec he succeeded in assembling a motley unit of 120 men, officers, regulars, and Canadians and they then proceeded from door to door begging for the food they were to need.²⁵ The men had just taken the field when they received intelligence that a party of forty or fifty marauding Oneidas had retired to nearby Repentigny and fallen asleep in an abandoned farmhouse. Vaudreuil led his men to the spot and the building was quickly surrounded. The Canadians, however, who had apparently partaken too liberally of alcohol, caused such a tumult while disposing of the Indians sleeping about the grounds that those within were aroused and a lively battle followed.²⁶ After an exchange of several volleys, Vaudreuil decided to hasten the inevitable outcome by setting the building on fire. Entertaining no doubts as to their own fate some Oneidas attempted to break out in the hope of avenging their own death by killing some of the besiegers. They were systematically shot down. Others remained inside and perished in the flames. Only one escaped while five were taken alive. Of this number one had his life spared, one was handed over to the Ottawas and three were burned to death by the long suffering inhabitants of the district of Montreal. This was the first French victory over the Iroquois

25. M. Benec, Relation des actions qu'il y a eu en cette campagne entre les françois et les sauvages anglois, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 11, pp. 299v - 300.

26. Recueil de ce qui s'est passé... LeBlant, ed., p. 220.

since the beginning of the war.²⁷ Because Vaudreuil had been the leader of the expedition his prestige in the colony must have soared considerably.

A second basic tactic of the Iroquois during those years consisted of posting war parties at strategic points along the Ottawa and intercepting the beaver convoys coming down from Michilimackinac. Early in 1691 the Iroquois executed this manoeuvre. Six hundred warriors under the noted chief la Chaudière Noire dug themselves in on the Ottawa and waited for a convoy to happen by. No one having appeared by midsummer the Iroquois chieftain scattered his men along the Rivière des Prairies country where they freely indulged in their hit-and-run tactics. Callières thereupon ordered Vaudreuil to take 150 men and clear the savages from the area. Having detected a large war party numbering some two hundred warriors, Vaudreuil returned to Montreal for reinforcements and, with four hundred men under him, set out in pursuit. They caught up with the enemy at the Long Sault. Leaving one hundred men behind to guard the canoes, Vaudreuil moved in to attack with the rest. In the hope of turning this encounter into a second Repentigny he ordered his left and right wings to circle so that the Iroquois might be hemmed in on three sides with their backs to the river. Unfortunately, his right wing had such a long detour to make that the left flank of the Indians remained uninvested. Victory as a result was probably not as overwhelming as Vaudreuil might have liked but it was nonetheless decisive. Some twenty Iroquois were killed, several others drowned while trying to

27. "S'estoit le premier escheq que l'ennemi eut reçu"... Recueil de ce qui s'est passé... LeBlant, ed., p. 222.

escape by swimming across the river, and the prisoners they were taking back were rescued.²⁸ Vaudreuil had now led the colonial forces to two major victories in two years and they may have stood out all the more for having come at a time when the fortunes of New France were at their lowest ebb.

While Vaudreuil was fighting the Iroquois and acquiring a military reputation, his position in Canadian society, largely as a result of his marriage, was also crystallizing. So important indeed was this event in determining his place in the colony and orientating his entire career that its immediate significance and some of its remote consequences must now be analyzed.

It was on November 21, 1690, during the period of festivities that followed Phips' abortive attack on Quebec, that Vaudreuil married seventeen year old Louise-Elizabeth de Joybert. The noble Joyberts came from Champagne and their lineage could be traced back through seventeen generations to the thirteenth century.²⁹ The father had come to Canada in 1665 with the regiment of Carignan - Salières and at a later date had settled in Acadia. There he died in 1678 after a turbulent existence which had featured almost as many run - ins with his superiors as with the New Englanders. His widow, Marie-Françoise, née Chartier de Lotbinière, was left penniless and decided to take her family to Canada where her brother René-Louis was settled and starting a brilliant career. Louise-Elizabeth received her education at the Ursuline convent

28. Bacqueville de la Potherie, Histoire de l'Amérique Septentrionale (Paris, 1753), vol. 3, pp. 159 - 161; Frontenac au ministre, 15 septembre 1692, AC, C 11 A, vol. 12, p. 25v.

29. L. Lejeune, Dictionnaire général... du Canada, (2 vol. Ottawa, 1931), vol. I, p. 846; [anonymous], "Les Joibert de Marson et de Soulanges, BRH, vol. 14 (1908), p. 56.

in Quebec, apparently through governor Denonville's largesse.³⁰ Whatever the merits of her education may have been, learning to write the French language was not one of them. One of her surviving letters to Frédéric de Maurepas, minister of the marine,³¹ features as many mistakes in spelling and punctuation as the one written by Vaudreuil to Pontchartrain in 1698.

There was therefore considerable similarity between Vaudreuil's background and that of his wife. Both were issued of the provincial nobility and both had suffered from poverty. This may help to explain the striking unity of action and purpose the couple later manifested in all matters where the interests of the family were involved. Just as important Vaudreuil, by his marriage, became closely associated with a group of persons who were already second-generation Canadians. Indeed, the simple fact that he had chosen to marry into a colonial family suggests that he felt completely at ease in Canada and had abandoned all thoughts of returning to France. The assimilative process now began to work its course and its effects were never more evident than in 1724 when he asked that the position of governor of Montreal, vacant by the death of Claude de Ramezay, be granted to Louis-Philippe, his eldest son. "Je l'ay fait, Monseigneur, avec d'autant plus d'empressement" he wrote, "que je m'étois persuadé qu'il ne souhaittoit rien tant que de revenir dans sa patrie pour y remplir une place qui l'auroit fort honoré."³² Louis-Philippe, it is true, preferred to

30. Juchereau de St. Ignace et Duplessis de Ste. Hélène, Les Annales de l'Hotel Dieu de Québec, 1636 - 1716, p. 400 note 6.

31. Madame de Vaudreuil au ministre, 29 octobre 1724, AC, C 11 A, vol. 46, pp. 106 - 115.

32. Vaudreuil au ministre, 4 novembre 1724, AC, C 11 A, vol. 46, p. 130v.

continue his career in the navy but the simple fact that the governor could now speak of Canada as his family's patrie indicates how strong his ties with the colony had become. These ties may also have contributed to shaping his philosophy of government which, he once stated, was based on the conviction "que c'est par la douceur plutôt que par la sévérité qu'on vient à bout des hommes."³³

Such a situation also involved drawbacks. The fact that there now existed a community of interest between Vaudreuil and certain elements in Canadian society worried Pontchartrain. For the same reason Louis XIV had certain misgivings about naming him to succeed Callières as governor - general in 1703.³⁴ Vaudreuil's adversaries also understood that his relationship with the Lotbinières was his political Achilles' heel and they frequently exploited this family connection in their attempts to discredit the governor. Although there is no evidence that Vaudreuil ever unduly favoured any of his wife's relatives, the minister was sufficiently disturbed to ask the intendant Raudot to investigate these accusations³⁵ and he frequently warned Vaudreuil, his wife, and his uncle, Lotbinière, of the unfortunate consequences favoritism would entail.³⁶

33. Vaudreuil au ministre, 6 novembre 1712, AC, C 11 A, vol. 33, p. 60v.

34. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 9 juin 1706, AC, B, vol. 27, pp. 224v - 225.

35. Le ministre à Raudot, 9 juin 1706, AC, B, vol. 27, p. 245.

36. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 17 juin 1705, AC, B, vol. 27, p. 74; Le ministre à Madame de Vaudreuil, 9 juin 1706, Ibid., pp. 271 - 271v.; le ministre à Vaudreuil, 9 juin 1706, Ibid., pp. 224v - 225; le ministre à Lotbinière, 9 juin 1706, Ibid., p. 277v.; le ministre à Madame de Vaudreuil, 30 juin 1707, AC, B, vol. 29, p. 109v.

Despite the transformations taking place in Vaudreuil's life and fortunes as a result of his distinguished service in the Iroquois war, his marriage, and the milieu in which he moved, France and his native Languedoc were not forgotten. In 1692 his mother died. Her family, the noble Chateauverduns, having certain claims on the Vaudreuil estates,³⁷ he crossed to France in the fall of that year and remained there until the following spring. He saw his brother Philippe I who had been obliged, on account of declining health, to retire to the family chateau after selling his company of French Guards for 78,000 livres.³⁸ During these final months of his life, Philippe I was attempting to put some order in his own affairs and in those of the family. For close to two hundred years the barony of Vaudreuil had been the cause of a quarrel between the Rigauds and the town of Revel, adjoining the estate. In 1518, as the result of a transaction negotiated between the family and the town consuls, the barony had been joined to Revel for purposes unstated but most probably to provide it with greater protection in a dangerous countryside. The understanding was that the inhabitants of Vaudreuil would bear their share of the taille royale but would not be asked to contribute to Revel's purely municipal expenses. The terms of this contract were respected until 1585 when the town consuls attempted to extort various sums from Marguerite de Narbonne, widow of Charles de Rigaud. In subsequent years the inhabitants themselves suffered

37. See for example Demandes en restitutions de tailles que M. de Chateauverdun qui est aux droits des fermiers judiciaires de la terre de Vaudreuil fait à la communauté de Revel, s.d., n.p., ADHG, Commune de Revel, série 2 E, 654, n.p.

38. Etat major des Gardes françaises, s.d., BN, Mss. fr., n.a., vol. 890, p. 144.

a similar fate. Not only were they taxed for purposes which benefited Revel alone but, allegedly, they were even subjected to a toll when they crossed the town. According to Vaudreuil these exactions had ruined the barony.³⁹ The fact that he later went to a great deal of trouble and expense to have them stopped seems to indicate that this statement contains a good deal of truth. As for Philippe I, to strengthen the family's position in the quarrel, he purchased the mayoralty of Revel.⁴⁰ In March, 1693, he bequeathed his estate to Philippe's children.⁴¹

Hardly had Vaudreuil returned to Canada than the death of Philippe I on June 5, 1695 plunged the family affairs into a state of turmoil that was to endure with little interruption until 1708. Antoinette de Colombet promptly came forward as the universal legatee, in accordance with the terms of the donation of 1678. The surviving brothers protested vigorously and obtained injunctions from the Parlement of Toulouse to protect their rights to the estate.⁴² The situation was serious enough to require Vaudreuil's presence in France but the minister was understandably reluctant to grant him two leaves of absence in three years. Permission was finally granted on the understanding that he would return to Canada on the first ships leaving France in the spring of 1695.⁴³

39. "Ce qui a ruiné cette terre qui est une chose criante." Demandes que Madame de Marson faisant pour M'r. le marquis de Vaudreuil à la commune de Revel, s.d., n.p., ADHG, Commune de Revel, série 2 E, 608.

40. Loc. cit.

41. Factum pour Philippe de Rigaud contre Arnaud de Rigaud et Antoinette de Colombet, s.d., BN, Clairambault, vol. 1103, p. 149.

42. Ibid., p. 148v.

43. Mémoire du Roy à Frontenac et Champigny, s.d., AC, B, vol. 17, p. 76v.

The intendant of Languedoc, Basville, was asked to do everything possible to hasten the proceedings.⁴⁴ The litigation, however, was extremely complex, being a three and at times a four party struggle between the Vaudreuil brothers, Antoinette de Colombet, the family creditors, and the Chateauverduns. No settlement was reached in 1695 and Vaudreuil felt obliged to send his wife to France the following year to protect his interests. Despite another letter from the minister to Basville, in which the intendant was called upon to provide Madame de Vaudreuil with all necessary help and protection,⁴⁵ the solution still appeared so far off that Vaudreuil returned to France a third time in 1697.

The lawsuit in which he was involved was complicated, but his task, although difficult, was clear. He first had to establish his title to the estate, notably against that of Antoinette de Colombet, and then wrest it from the family creditors. He was aided in the first task by the pride and esprit de corps typical of the old nobility. It is important to note that by this date Philippe was the only member of the family who could perpetuate the name of de Rigaud de Vaudreuil. Arnaud, separated from his wife for the past twenty-five years, was childless; Philippe I had died unmarried; François-Aimé, who had taken Orders, had died in 1679; Antoine, who had lately left the Church, died in 1699. The estate, therefore, could only be reconstructed around the offspring of Philippe's marriage. This had probably been the main reason behind Philippe I's decision to sign a statement in favour of his

44. Le ministre à Basville, 22 janvier 1695, AM, B 2, vol. 106, p. 135v.

45. Le ministre à Basville, 12 septembre 1696, AM, B 2, vol. 117, pp. 644v - 645.

nephews two months before his death. As for Arnaud he raised no objections when his brother's claim to the estates deeded to him by his father, was recognized as valid.⁴⁶

Where the creditors were concerned Vaudreuil stopped at nothing to invalidate their claim to the estate. Since the dame Talon was a Protestant, he argued, she had no power to contract, hence her title was invalid. As for Chabert's title, since it was derived from the dame Talon, it was equally worthless.⁴⁷ How these arguments were received in the courts of law is unfortunately not known, but appearances indicate that they had not met with unqualified success. By 1708 he had indeed succeeded in vindicating his claim to Vaudreuil and was now in a position to fire his first blast at Revel but this had been done by what is described as an "accomodement".⁴⁸ As for Cavanial it remained for the time being in the possession of the Chateauverduns although Vaudreuil was reserved the right to buy it back for the sum of 50,000 livres until 1718.⁴⁹ The fact that he left Cavanial to his wife by his will of November 10, 1718, seems to indicate that he had availed himself of this prerogative.⁵⁰ Unfortunately, no figures on the cost of the lawsuit are available, but from the length and complexity of the affair it would appear safe to conclude that it cost Vaudreuil an

46. Factum pour Philippe de Rigaud contre Arnaud de Rigaud et Antoinette de Colombet, s.d., BN, Clairambault, vol. 1103, p. 145.

47. Ibid., p. 145v.; Vaudreuil au ministre, 7 novembre 1701, AC, C 11 A, vol. 19, pp. 83v - 84.

48. In other words, through a compromise. Le ministre à Basville, 5 septembre 1708, AM, B 2, vol. 208, pp. 1124 - 1125.

49. d'Hozier, op. cit., vol. 6, section Vaudreuil, p. 40.

50. Testament de Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, 10 novembre 1718, n.p., PAC, Vaudreuil Papers.

enormous sum of money.

Meantime, both at Versailles and in the colony, largely as a result of his persistent efforts, Vaudreuil had succeeded in creating an enviable reputation for himself. His superiors were impressed by his devotion to his duties; an admiring Frontenac praised the "diligence incroyable" he had displayed during the decisive campaign of 1696 against the Iroquois.⁵¹ His three visits to France had also been most useful since they had enabled him to visit the court and insure that his name would not be forgotten in the files of the ministry of the marine. The recommendations of the colonial administrators, who spoke of him in the highest terms,⁵² added weight to the demands he made on these occasions. In 1692, his salary was increased by 1,000 livres.⁵³ In 1694, Vaudreuil pointed out with pique that several of his subordinates were commissioned as naval lieutenants and midshipmen while he was unranked in the navy. To remedy the situation he asked to be made capitaine de vaisseau. Frontenac and Champigny endorsed his demand and the court granted him his request,⁵⁴ although the fact that the salary was withheld indicates the purely honorary nature

51. Frontenac au ministre, 25 octobre 1696, AC, C 11 A, vol. 13, p. 149v.

52. Champigny described Vaudreuil as "une personne de mérite" in his dispatch of September 21, 1692, AC, C 11 A, vol. 12, p. 70; in the abstract of one of Vaudreuil's own dispatches it was noted "M. de Frontenac recommande fortement M. de Vaudreuil. M. l'évesque et M. de Champigny en parlent aussi comme un sujet d'un mérite distingué." Vaudreuil au ministre [abstract of dispatch, henceforth denoted abst.] s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 12, p. 325v.

53. Mémoire du Roy à Frontenac et Champigny, s.d., AC, B, vol. 16, p. 235v.

54. Mémoire des officiers qui demandent à Sa Majesté leur avancement ou congés de passer en France. s.d., AC, D 2 C, vol. 47, p. 118; Ibid., p. 217; Frontenac et Champigny au ministre, 5 novembre 1694, AC, C 11 A, vol. 13, pp. 24v - 25.

of the promotion. By that date the home authorities had great confidence in Vaudreuil's ability. In 1697, for instance, plans had been drawn up for extensive land and sea operations against the English colonies. A fleet under the marquis de Nesmond was to rendez vous with 1,500 men at Pentagouet and the two forces would then devastate the coast and attack Boston. Frontenac was honoured with command of the land force but should he be unable to assume leadership the minister instructed that Vaudreuil should replace him.⁵⁵ Although the expedition failed to materialize, the fact that he had been selected over Callières may have led Vaudreuil to believe that he had displaced the governor of Montreal as second man in the colony. Finally, in 1698, came the greatest honour of all, the Croix de St. Louis, in recognition of his services during the Iroquois war. By now Vaudreuil must have been entertaining serious hopes of succeeding the elderly Frontenac as governor-general of Canada.

These hopes would soon be deceived. Vaudreuil's sole advantage over Callières was his greater popularity in the colony where he numbered the intendant Champigny among his close friends and the enterprising Lotbinière among his relatives. The governor of Montreal was his equal as a soldier, although his poor state of health was making it progressively more difficult for him to exercise his talents in this field. He was also a more experienced administrator and a strict disciplinarian, something which Vaudreuil found difficult to be. Callières also enjoyed powerful support at the court in the person of his brother François, a

55. Le ministre à Frontenac, 6 mars 1697, AC, B, vol. 19, p. 166v.; le ministre à Vaudreuil, Ibid., pp. 228v - 229.

diplomat of note and one of the King's private secretaries. The two brothers corresponded frequently and François did not hesitate to exercise his considerable influence on behalf of his brother in Canada.⁵⁶ Moreover, although the home authorities thought highly of Vaudreuil, he does not appear to have been considered as a possible successor to Frontenac. In 1699, a list of ten candidates for the position of governor-general of Canada had been drawn up by the ministry. It included Callières and nine high-ranking naval officers.⁵⁷ Vaudreuil was ignored.

The attitude of the court on the question of the Frontenac succession was not known in the colony. As a result, when the governor finally died on November 28, 1698, both Callières and Vaudreuil sprang into action. Colonial statutes directed that upon the death of a governor-general the governor of Montreal automatically replaced him until a successor was appointed. Champigny was therefore obliged to send Courtemanche to Montreal to advise Callières of Frontenac's demise. The latter, who knew very well that the intendant would throw his support behind Vaudreuil, decided to act first. He concocted a clever scheme with Courtemanche whereby the envoy would slip off into the English colonies instead of returning to Quebec and cross to France on the first ship available. Upon his arrival he would go straight to François de Callières and advise him of Frontenac's death. The plan was smoothly executed. Upon reaching Sorel Courtemanche disappeared

56. Le ministre à François de Callières, 8 mai 1697, AM, B 2, vol. 125, p. 205v.; le ministre à François de Callières, 1 décembre 1700, AM, B 2, vol. 149, p. 32lv.

57. Officiers proposés pour le gouvernement de Canada, 1699, AC, D 2 C, vol. 49, p. 54.

up the Richelieu instead of continuing down the St. Lawrence. Meantime, in Quebec, Vaudreuil and Champigny were waiting for his return with growing trepidation and some time had elapsed before they realized that Callières had outwitted them. There was now no time to be lost. The services of Vincelot were retained and he was given Vaudreuil's dispatches and enough money to charter a fast ship at the closest New England port. The colony was now treated to the unusual spectacle of two rival emissaries racing each other across the Atlantic. Despite his considerable head start, Courtemanche arrived at Versailles only a few hours before Vincelot. These were sufficient to allow him to see François de Callières who then hurried to Louis XIV. Vincelot, for his part, had gone to Pontchartrain but when the minister approached the King with the news of Frontenac's death he was informed that His Majesty was already aware of the development and had granted the vacant post to François de Callières for his brother.⁵⁸

Meanwhile winter had closed in on Canada and shut off the colony from the external world. What was transpiring in France would not be known till late the following spring but in the meantime Callières was interim governor-general and full of new feelings of self-importance. "On a veue ... M. de Callières prendre tout à coups un empire si despotique," complained la Potherie, "qu'il sembloit que M. l'intendant même devoit lui obéir aveuglement."⁵⁹

Despite the very temporary nature of his duties he insisted that his provisions be registered by the Sovereign Council. He lorded

58. Recueil de ce qui s'est passé... LeBlant, ed., pp. 242 - 243.

59. la Potherie au ministre, 2 juin 1699, AC, C 11 A, vol. 17, p. 112.

it over Champigny who had backed Vaudreuil. Finally, on one occasion when he reviewed the colonial troops, he insisted upon and received honours due only to a marshall of France, something which caused Vaudreuil, la Potherie, and the commissaire de la marine, la Touche, to write indignant protests to the minister.⁶⁰ The tension and uncertainty were finally dispelled early in the summer of 1699 when the first vessels arrived from France. Callières was confirmed in the position of governor-general while Vaudreuil was consoled with the government of Montreal and a commission as governor-general in case of Callières' absence.⁶¹ His salary also took another forward leap as a result of this promotion, passing from 4,080 to 5,000 livres.⁶² Callières' success came nonetheless as a blow to Vaudreuil's partisans. One of them, la Durantaye, tendered his resignation as captain of a company of the troupes de la marine.⁶³ As for Champigny and la Potherie they would soon leave the colony to take up positions elsewhere, the former in France, the latter in the West Indies. Colonial politics was serious business and it was dangerous to have associated oneself too closely with a losing cause.

Although Vaudreuil and Callières managed to get on correctly after the events of 1698 and 1699 both men remained profoundly suspicious of each other and one may wonder how long the veneer of

60. la Touche au ministre, 3 juin 1699, Ibid., pp. 105 - 105v.; Vaudreuil et la Potherie au ministre, 31 mai et 5 juin 1699, Ibid., pp. 110 - 110v.

61. Provisions de gouverneur de l'Ile de Montréal pour M. le chevalier de Vaudreuil, 28 mai 1699, AC, B, vol. 20, pp. 242 - 243; le ministre à Vaudreuil, 30 mai 1699, Ibid., pp. 250v - 251.

62. The salary was 3,000 livres and the gratification 2,000. AC, AC, D 2 C, vol. 49, p. 57.

63. Recueil de ce qui s'est passé... LeBlant, ed., p. 245.

civility would have endured had Callières lived beyond 1703. The new governor was a sick man. "Il est au lit toute l'année accablé de goutte et d'une autre incommodité qui l'empêche de s'asseoir," cruelly wrote la Potherie.⁶⁴ It had taken him fifteen years to win the post he now occupied. No one knew how long his tenure would be, although most people, and that may have included Callières himself, probably expected it to be short. This, however, may only have strengthened his resolve that no one should be permitted to cast a shadow over his newly acquired authority and prestige. Vaudreuil, of course, was the principal threat. The new governor of Montreal was popular: "Il a le coeur du peuple," sang la Potherie;⁶⁵ "c'est un gentilhomme de qualité et de mérite," echoed Champigny.⁶⁶ Callières, besides being far less popular, was crippled while Vaudreuil's reputation as a warrior had spread as far as Acadia. When St. Castin outlined a plan for an attack on Boston in 1702, he suggested that Vaudreuil be given the command. "M'r. de Vaudreuil," he wrote, "est je crois celui qui est le plus propre. Il est homme de guerre et n'est pas prévenu de lui-même et capable d'écouter les ordres qu'on lui donnera. Joint à ce qu'il a beaucoup de douceur dans sa manière de commander et est aimé."⁶⁷ As a result, Callières seems to have decided that if his own star was to shine Vaudreuil would have to be pushed into the background. The ensuing clash of wills was productive

64. la Potherie au ministre, s.d., AC, F 3, vol. 2, p. 255v.

65. Ibid., p. 259.

66. Champigny au ministre, 7 novembre 1701, AC, C 11 A, vol. 19, p. 152.

67. Mémoire sur l'expédition contre Baston par M. de St. Castin, s.d., Coll. Mss. N. F., vol. 2, p. 398.

of minor squabbles which might easily have grown into open rifts had the minister not moved in quickly to maintain order.

Callières first betrayed his intention of repressing Vaudreuil when he refused to recognize his commission as interim governor-general. Vaudreuil naturally lost no time in complaining to Pontchartrain who curtly ordered the governor to conform to the King's wishes.⁶⁸ But although he had been vindicated his fears were now aroused. In 1701, with war again threatening, he told the minister of his suspicions that Callières would disregard him if it came to sending expeditions against the enemy. Once again he was reassured: "Je ne doute pas que M'r. de Callière soit bien aise de se reposer sur vous des expéditions qu'il y aura à faire en cas de guerre," wrote Pontchartrain. "Je ne laisse pas de luy en écrire comme vous le désirez."⁶⁹ In 1702, war having become a reality, Vaudreuil sought out the governor and asked him for instructions. He was told to remain strictly on the defensive until further notice. Upheld by Pontchartrain on two previous occasions, Vaudreuil chose to renew his complaints. This time he pointed out that in waiting for Callières' orders to arrive from Quebec he might lose unique opportunities of striking telling blows at the enemy. His own strategy consisted of leading 1,000 or 1,500 men in a surprise attack on Albany and to justify this expedition he elaborated a complicated argument. Admittedly, the Iroquois were

68. Le ministre à Callières, 31 mai 1701, AC, B, vol. 22, p. 223; Vaudreuil au ministre [abst.], 24 octobre 1700, AC, C 11 A, vol. 18, p. 45v.

69. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 6 mai 1702, AC, B, vol. 23, p. 91v.

now neutrals. This neutrality, however, was only apparent for these Indians still favoured the English. If the French could quickly overwhelm the latter the Iroquois would permanently abandon them. Furthermore, to get around the troublesome Callières once and for all, he asked that henceforth the minister should send him the king's orders directly.⁷⁰ This time the overanxious Vaudreuil had clearly gone too far and he met with an uncereemonious rebuff. The court had favoured an attack on New York in 1702 but the climate of opinion had changed when the governor of Montreal's dispatches arrived. Bluntly he was told that since Callières was briefed by the king himself he should refrain from any undertakings to which the governor had not consented. As for his proposed expedition against Albany, far from permanently subduing the Five Nations, it might provoke them into renewing the war... "ainsi donnez-nous bien garde de le faire sans ordre."⁷¹ This last incident shows Vaudreuil in a rather poor light. His proposed expedition against Albany conflicted directly with the policy of neutrality to which Callières was gradually winning the court and which he himself would adopt as soon as he succeeded him. Only ambition and the hope of discrediting the sick governor can have motivated him in this instance.

The government of Montreal to which Vaudreuil had been assigned included the most important as well as the most vulnerable parts of New France. As the previous war had demonstrated no

70. Vaudreuil au ministre, 4 novembre 1702, AC, C 11 A, vol. 20, p. 214v.; Vaudreuil au ministre, 20 novembre 1702, Ibid., pp. 122v - 123v.

71. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 20 juin 1703, AC, B, vol. 23, pp. 243 - 243v.

other sector of the colony was so exposed to Iroquois inroads. The city itself was the metropolis of the fur trade, the seat of a large merchant community and also the place where the gravest abuses occurred in the sale of liquor to the Indians. The local governor was therefore faced with problems military, commercial and moral in nature and Vaudreuil displayed a keen interest in each one of them. Frequent inspection tours enabled him to make constructive suggestions to the minister on the type of economic activities the territory was best suited for as well as to ascertain whether the numerous stockades were in a good state of repair.⁷² He also appears to have come into frequent contact with the merchant class and at times he appears as their representative in outlining their grievances and demanding redress. The merchants at this time were going through a difficult period. Although the congés had been abolished since 1696 many persisted in supplying the coureurs de bois with merchandise thus perpetuating the illicit trade with the Indians. Some of the coureurs, however, instead of returning to their employers, were running off to Louisiana. On one occasion, at Vaudreuil's request, Pontchartrain agreed to oblige them to settle their accounts with the Canadian merchants.⁷³ Another and far greater threat to the Montreal fur trade was the post of Detroit founded by LaMothe-Cadillac in 1701. Besides completely disorganizing Montreal's hinterland, which lay in the area of Michilimackinac, this post was so situated that it spared the

72. Vaudreuil au ministre, 1 octobre 1701, AC, C 11 A, vol. 19, p. 227; Vaudreuil au ministre, 7 novembre 1701, Ibid., pp. 82 - 82v.

73. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 31 mai 1701, AC, B, vol. 22, pp. 225 - 225v.

western Indians the long journey to the colony. Montreal was in an uproar and Cadillac, in one of his dispatches, states that Vaudreuil considered his government threatened with imminent ruin.⁷⁴

The reference is interesting for it indicates that the conflict between the two, which came close to costing Vaudreuil his political life, had its roots in the period before 1703. The humanitarian side of his nature is also revealed at this time in the concern he showed for the poor of Montreal. On one occasion he is seen casting about for advice on how to relieve their plight.⁷⁵

Although Vaudreuil sided with the merchants on the vital issues just outlined, his stand on the brandy question may have disappointed their hopes. The sale of alcohol was prohibited in 1702 for a period of two years and at a much later date it is revealed that this prohibition went into effect at Vaudreuil's request.⁷⁶

Although there can be no doubt that he was largely motivated by a genuine abhorrence of the disorder caused among the Indians by alcohol, his attitude also reaped rich political dividends. When Callières died the clergy unanimously threw its powerful support behind Vaudreuil's candidacy. Indeed, faintly but unmistakably, there runs throughout Vaudreuil's tenure as governor of Montreal the streak of opportunism. He was obviously striving to rally to his cause all the important colonial groups in preparation for the day when it would be time to choose a new governor.

Unfortunately, very little is known of Vaudreuil's private life

74. laMothe-Cadillac au ministre, 25 septembre 1702, AC, C 11 E, vol. 14, p. 121.

75. [Deschambault] à [Vaudreuil], s.d., PAC, Beauharnois Papers, pp. 353 - 356.

76. Ramezay et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 7 novembre 1715, AM, B 1, vol. 8, p. 269v.

during these years. The data that does exist, however, all points to the fact that he was assuming his place in Canadian society and was on the way to becoming a Canadian gentleman. He owned a house in Montreal, built shortly after he became the local governor; he was a shareholder of the Company of the Colony having invested 1000 livres in the enterprise, on paper only like everyone else;⁷⁷ finally, in 1702, he became a seigneur. His grant was situated just across the western tip of Montreal island, where the Ottawa joins the St. Lawrence, and covered an area four lieues in width and varying between one half and one and a half lieues in depth. Included in the grant was the small island known as Ile aux Tourtres, across from Senneville, and the rights of hunting, fishing and trading with the Indians.⁷⁸ This seigneurie was so well situated for the fur trade that the court decided it was unbecoming for a governor to own such property and delayed ratification until 1716. As for Vaudreuil's monetary problems they still appeared as acute as ever. His salary had grown but his family, which numbered seven sons and one daughter by 1703, had grown even faster while the lawsuit over the family estates and the house he was building caused him a great deal of expense. In 1701 Champigny informed the minister that Vaudreuil was without means.⁷⁹ In 1702 Vaudreuil himself asked for financial succour,

77. Liste des actionnaires de la Compagnie de la Colonie, 15 octobre 1700, AC, F 3, vol. 8, p. 192v.

78. Concession à M. le marquis de Vaudreuil, 12 octobre 1702, AC, C 11 G, vol. 8, pp. 137v - 138v.; see also R.L. Séguin, "L'Ile aux Tourtres, avant poste de peuplement," RHAF, vol. 8, (1954 - 1955), pp. 243 - 253.

79. Champigny au ministre, 7 novembre 1701, AC, C 11 A, vol. 19, p. 152.

stating that he was barely able to make ends meet.⁸⁰ The court, as usual, was prepared to lend a hand and granted Vaudreuil consecutive gratifications of 1,000 livres in 1702 and 1703.

On May 26, 1703, Hector de Callières died. It is highly improbable that at this juncture Vaudreuil lost much time in false regrets. He was now sixty years old and had served sixteen years in the colony. He probably realized that Callières' death would present him with his last opportunity to win the coveted post and for almost four years he had been carefully preparing the ground for the day that was now at hand. The lesson of 1698 had not been lost upon him. Callières' success at that time had largely been due to his influence at court. Since then Madame de Marson, who now resided in France, had been busy strengthening Vaudreuil's position at Versailles and when the moment arrived several persons were prepared to campaign on behalf of her son-in-law.⁸¹

As soon as Vaudreuil was informed of Callières' death he hurried his dispatches to France, stressing his noble birth, his many years of service, his knowledge of the colony, and his physical health, and then went down to Quebec to take command on an interim basis.⁸² Support for his candidacy was not lacking. It came from colonial society,⁸³ from the new intendant François de Beauharnois;⁸⁴ it came especially from the religious bodies who

80. Vaudreuil au ministre, 20 novembre 1702, AC, C 11 A, vol. 20, p. 124.

81. Juchereau de St. Ignace et Duplessis de Ste. Hélène, Les Annales de l'Hotel Dieu de Québec, 1636 - 1716, p. 320.

82. Vaudreuil au ministre, [abst] s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 21, pp. 43v - 44.

83. F.X. Charlevoix, Histoire de la Nouvelle France, vol. 2, p. 288.

84. Beauharnois au ministre, [abst.] s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 21, p. 46v.

enthusiastically endorsed his application.⁸⁵ Jérôme de Pontchartrain had also been impressed by Vaudreuil's record as governor of Montreal and his personal intervention overcame the doubts which Vaudreuil's Canadian connections had sown in the mind of Louis XIV.⁸⁶ The minister recommended Vaudreuil as a person who not only could maintain order but also eliminate the abuses which had crept in under previous governors.⁸⁷ Only a candidate with influence in the very highest circle could now have triumphed over Vaudreuil, whose popularity and carefully prepared campaign had won him support both influential and widespread. Such a candidate appears to have been lacking.⁸⁸ On August 1, 1703, only two months and five days after the death of Callières, Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil became governor of New France.⁸⁹

Upon arriving in Canada in 1687 Vaudreuil had taken his place within the small group of senior administrators who were responsible for directing the colony's military efforts. Vaudreuil had ranked third among them, behind the governor-general and the governor of Montreal, Hector de Callières. Despite his efforts to

85. See the marginal comments on Vaudreuil au ministre, [abst.] s. d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 21, pp. 43v - 44; also, Tremblay à Laval, 12 mars 1704, ASQ, carton N, letter 30.

86. Le ministre à Madame de Vaudreuil, 9 juin 1706, AC, B, vol. 27, pp. 271 - 271v.

87. "J'ay répondu au Roy lorsque je vous ay proposé pour Gouverneur-général q' non seulement vous y maintiendriez le bon ordre mais mesme que vous feriez cessér tous les abus qui pouvoient s'y estre introduits sous les autres gouverne'." Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 17 juin 1705, RAPQ 1938 - 1939, p. 70.

88. The only other candidacy it has been possible to uncover is that of Coulombe, a naval officer. AM, B 2, vol. 169, pp. 392 - 393.

89. This is the date borne by Vaudreuil's provisions as governor-general. Complément des ordonnances et jugements des gouverneurs et intendants du Canada, 3 vol. (Québec, 1856), vol. 3, pp. 58 - 59.

bypass the latter in 1698, this grading had remained unchanged and it was only after death had removed both his seniors that he finally acceded to the position of governor-general. But while Vaudreuil did not succeed in speeding up the mechanics of promotion, he did manage to maintain himself directly behind Callières in the colony's governing hierarchy. The feat, although not spectacular, had not been an easy one. It had required that he repeatedly prove himself as a soldier, that he keep himself on good terms with his superiors in order to win good reports to the ministry and, not least important, that he strengthen his position at the court where influence or lack of it usually determined the success or failure of one's attempts to gain honours and promotion. For sixteen years Vaudreuil had worked tenaciously at each of these three tasks and it is no mere coincidence that he had largely succeeded in each one of them when he became governor-general in 1703.

CHAPTER III

Problems of a New Era

There was little similarity between the office of governor in Canada before 1760 and that of provincial governor as it existed in France during the same period. The latter position was essentially an outgrowth of the Middle Ages, and the vast powers once connected with it had been fatally subverted by the growth of a strong central government. When Cardinal Richelieu died in 1642 the governors had been reduced to political insignificance and the substance of their former authority now rested with the intendants. Such a situation never developed in Canada. There, the two officials worked side by side and shared in the task of administering the colony.

The governor and intendant in New France were primarily the agents of the ministry of the marine, the metropolitan organism where basic colonial policy was formulated. The two officials advised the minister on local conditions, supplied him with the information he required before reaching a decision on matters of colonial concern, and usually recommended their own solutions to the problems which developed. Quite frequently, the minister would allow the governor or intendant to deal with a situation according to their own knowledge and judgment of the affair and limit himself to approving or disapproving what they had done. Slowness of communications, which limited contacts between colony and mother country to an exchange of annual dispatches, further

enlarged the autonomy of action enjoyed by the local administrators.¹ The governor and intendant, therefore, not only carried out the orders coming to them from France but also played an important part in shaping colonial policy. Furthermore, although the inhabitants did not participate constitutionally in the administration of the colony, they were not an inarticulate mass. In a number of ways, they could exert pressure on the administration and call attention to their interests. Colonial policy, to be properly understood, must be visualized as emanating from Versailles as the expression of the minister's will. Before being implemented at the colonial level, it was acted upon and sometimes altered by a complex set of local interests and forces. Such a procedure was re-enacted time and time again under Vaudreuil.

The duties of a governor-general in New France, although less numerous than those of the intendant, were extremely complex and important. Foremost among them was the management of Indian affairs. A colony such as Canada needed the friendship and goodwill of the Indian tribes by which it was surrounded on all sides if it was to survive and prosper. The memory of the Iroquois wars, which had almost ruined the colony during the seventeenth century,

1. In 1712, for instance, Michel Bégon, lately transferred from the intendency of the port of Rochefort to that of Canada, refused to sanction one of Vaudreuil's projects on the ground that ministerial approval had not yet been received. Vaudreuil commented: "M. Bégon n'est pas au fait encore de bien des choses icy. Le temps l'y mettra et luy fera connoistre qu'il y a bien de la différence entre Rochefort et Québec. A Rochefort on reçoit vos ordres tous les huit jours et icy nous ne les recevons que tous les ans, ce qui fait que souvent une chose est commencée et finie avant que nous ayons eu le temps de vous en donner avis." Vaudreuil au ministre, 15 mai 1713, AC, C 11 A, vol. 34, p. 37v.

served as a grim reminder of how dangerous the enmity of the Indians could be. Maintaining the natives in the French interest was no less important from an economic point of view since they were the unique source of beaver and menues pelleteries which constituted the colony's chief export staple. Indian relations, as a result, had extremely important commercial overtones. To insure a constant supply of pelts, new tribes had to be brought within the sphere of French influence; routes used by the Indians as they made their way to the colony had to be secured against hostile designs. To achieve these various ends, the governors had traditionally disposed of three principal tools. Each year the home authorities appropriated a certain sum for the purchase of gifts, usually gunpowder, ammunition and ironwares, which the governor distributed to the Indians when he met with them. The prospect of material reward made the natives more submissive to his orders and more eager to remain on good terms with the French. Secondly, the governor was authorized to build trading posts at strategic points in the West and staff them with garrisons and commanding officers. These settlements were most useful economically and also served a political purpose by strengthening French influence in the interior. Finally, the governor was authorized to distribute annually the twenty-five trading licenses known as congés. The bearers of these permits circulated among the tribes, not only collecting their furs but also frequently arbitrating their quarrels. Under normal circumstances, gifts, posts and congés were sufficient to maintain order among the Indians and uphold French commerce. Vaudreuil's position was enormously weakened when, for reasons that will later

be explained, he found himself deprived of the right to distribute the congés and to establish trading posts.

Besides directing Indian affairs, the governor was also assigned a certain part in the conduct of relations between New France and the English colonies to the South. His personal initiative in this field was, however, quite limited, for Canada's relations with other colonies were carefully regulated from above by the minister of the marine. Nonetheless, the governor might be presented with opportunities to conduct negotiations and conferences with his English counterparts, particularly in time of war. More important still, he usually had his own ideas on what Canada's relations with the English colonies should be. At times these ideas found expression in tacit understandings with the English governors which could well be at variance with official policy.² The governor, therefore, despite the limited role he was assigned, was not a negligible factor in the shaping of Anglo-French relations in America.

The powers which the governor wielded in time of peace were considerably enhanced in time of war, when he acted as commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The twenty-eight companies of troupes de la marine, the contingents of militia, and the Indian auxiliaries were under his absolute command. He also mapped out offensive and defensive strategy, so that the survival of the colony often hinged on the decisions he took. The nature of these duties undoubtedly explain why the governor usually had a military

2. The illegal fur trade between Canada and New York provides the most striking example of these colonial ententes. This commerce was carried on in spite of repeated prohibitions by the minister of the marine.

background and, beginning with Callières, extensive experience in Canadian affairs.

Vaudreuil found a bleak situation when he replaced the deceased Callières at the head of the colony in the early summer of 1703. In 1702, after only four years of respite, war had once more erupted between France and England over the question of Louis XIV's Spanish policy and his sudden support of Stuart claims to the English throne. Automatically, Canada had found herself at war with the English colonies, only two of which, however, New York and Massachusetts, represented a military threat. The moment for a recurrence of hostilities was ill-chosen. The colony was then feeling the full impact of the economic crisis resulting from many years of over-trading in beaver. The market was saturated, prices fell, and the merchant community was poised on the edge of bankruptcy. This crisis also threatened to erode Canada's network of Indian alliances. Since the natives could only obtain the now indispensable European wares in return for their furs, a large proportion of them beaver pelts, they might well be driven to Albany into the arms of the English, as a result of the collapse of the Canadian market. The entire western alliance stood in the balance.

Because of this critical situation, the colony, more than ever before, needed metropolitan support. Unfortunately, such assistance was not forthcoming. As a result of the European situation the minister of the marine, Jérôme de Pontchartrain, could spare little for Canada. "Le ministre de la marine n'a pas de fonds à employer et on tourne tout du costé des armées de terre" reported the well-informed abbé Tremblay, Paris procurator of the bishop of Quebec.³

3. Tremblay à Laval, 15 juin 1703, ASQ, carton N, letter 121.

But even if funds had been available, it is not at all certain that Pontchartrain would have been prepared to divert a sizeable portion of them toward Canada. The minister was disillusioned with this barren and expensive North American colony, and his attitude was nowhere better reflected than in the marginal notation appearing on the abstract of one of the intendant Jacques Raudot's dispatches. When the latter stated gratefully that the money the King sent to Canada represented a charity without which the inhabitants could not subsist, Pontchartrain tersely commented: "Il [Louis XIV] a d'autres aumônes à faire." And when the intendant went on to assure him that Canada would eventually prove useful to France, the minister commented with heavy irony: "Il y a cent ans qu'on le dit."⁴ The straitened condition of French finance and Pontchartrain's state of mind gave rise to an austerity programme that would deepen rather than alleviate the Canadian crisis. In his dispatches to the intendants, the minister repeatedly emphasized the necessity of spending as little as possible.⁵ To make matters more difficult still the troupes de la marine had been reduced from fifty to thirty men per company shortly after the treaty of Ryswick. Despite the outbreak of war, they were not brought back to full strength.⁶ All this meant only

4. J. Raudot au ministre, [abst.] 30 avril, 30 octobre, 2 et 5 novembre 1706, AC, C 11 A, vol. 24, p. 121v.

5. Mémoire pour servir d'instruction au sr. de Beauharnois, 6 mai 1702, AC, B, vol. 23, p. 82; Le ministre à J. et A.D. Raudot, 30 juin 1707, AC, B, vol. 29, p. 66v.

6. Mémoire du Roy à Callières et Champigny, s.d., AC, B, vol. 22, pp. 100 - 100v.; Vaudreuil et Beauharnois au ministre, 15 novembre 1703, AC, C 11 A, vol. 21, p. 12; the number of regulars serving in the colony declined from a high of 1453 in 1696 to a low of 822 in 1703. Soldats qui servent dans la colonie, AC, D 2 C, vol. 47, pp. 101v [irregular pagination] and 270v.

one thing: that Canada would have to weather the storm as best it could on its own slender resources.

Although this policy placed Vaudreuil in a difficult position, it at least clarified the task at hand. The colony was obviously in no position to sustain a war effort, particularly against New York and the Iroquois. Some guarantee had to be found against the possibility of attack from either of these sources. The solution to this problem resided in the peace treaty of 1701 concluded between the French, their Western allies and the Five Nations.⁷ If Vaudreuil could keep this treaty operative despite the outbreak of war, Canada would not only gain immunity from the attacks of the Iroquois but also from those of New York, since it was most unlikely the English would attempt anything without the full support of their allies. Keeping this treaty in force, however, depended on the interplay of a number of factors. To understand what these were, something must now be said of the main developments to occur during Callières' short but significant administration.

The most important event to occur under Callières, and one of the more important of the French régime, was precisely the peace treaty of 1701 which Vaudreuil was now called upon to preserve. Several factors had contributed to this settlement, notably the weakened state of the Five Nations,⁸ lack of English support, and their fear of the combined striking power of the French and the Western Indians. The Iroquois had not been transformed into

7. For this treaty see, AC, C 11 A, vol. 19, pp. 41 - 44.

8. The governor of New York estimated that by 1697 the fighting force of the Iroquois had dwindled to 1,400 warriors. Bellomont to the Lords of Trade, October 24, 1700, NYCD, vol. 4, p. 768.

French allies by this treaty. Their economic ties with the English were far too strong to permit a complete break with them even if they had desired it. They had, however, been neutralized, and more important still the French had introduced themselves as mediators between them and the Western tribes. In case of a violation of the peace treaty only the French could provide redress.⁹

Upon the outbreak of hostilities in 1702, the whole problem of Iroquois relations came up for re-examination. Pontchartrain, at this time, had not yet decided upon a definite war policy for Canada but he was hoping that the peace treaty with the Five Nations might be transformed into an offensive alliance against the English. He expressed this hope in 1701, when war was threatening, and again in 1702, after it had actually begun.¹⁰ Callières, for his part, was authorized to carry out "quelque coup considérable" on the English settlements.¹¹ The governor, however, did not share this aggressive mood. Boston was reportedly fitting out a fleet to attack some part of French North America and this made it necessary to concentrate a large number of men at Quebec.¹² The colonial budget, in his opinion, would have to be increased by 60,000 livres to finance a large scale

9. This was the substance of the treaty of 1701. If one of the Indian nations violated the newly established peace, it was decreed that those who had been wronged would not strike back but make their grievance known to the governor. If the offending Indians then refused to compensate the injured party, the governor would join up with the latter to inflict punishment on them.

10. Mémoire du Roy à Callières et Champigny, 31 mai 1701, AC, B, vol. 22, p. 24lv.; le ministre à Callières, 6 mai 1702, AC, B, vol. 23, p. 73v.

11. Le ministre à Callières, 10 mai 1702, AC, B, vol. 23, p. 105.

12. Callières au ministre, 4 novembre 1702, AC, C 11 A, vol. 20, p. 157.

military operation.¹³ In view of the confused state of the West he may have doubted the reliability of the French allies. More important still, an ill-advised attack on New York would almost certainly provoke the Five Nations to war. For the time being the governor stressed that their neutrality was all that could be hoped for.¹⁴

The minister was soon won to this point of view. His next dispatch indicates that he had discarded the idea of winning active Iroquois support against the English and was now satisfied with their neutrality which protected both the French and their western allies from attack.¹⁵ The Iroquois themselves were well aware of the advantages of a peace which enabled them to complement their trade at Albany with a very useful one at Montreal, where the best grades of gunpowder were available.¹⁶ Soon after the conclusion of the treaty, a French - Iroquois rapprochement occurred. Commercial ties were established between Canada and the Confederacy. Then, in the summer of 1702, the Onondagas and Senecas asked that missionaries be settled among them. Callières, who had been hoping for such an opportunity, was only too happy to oblige. Father Lamberville, a lay brother and a blacksmith were sent back with the Onondagas, while Fathers Garnier and

13. Ibid., p. 160v.

14. Ibid., pp. 159v- 160.

15. Le ministre à Callières, 20 juin 1703, AC, B, vol. 23, pp. 210 - 210v.

16. In 1712 the intendant Michel Bégon declared that gunpowder was the last link holding the Indians in the French interest. Bégon au ministre, 12 novembre 1712, AC, C 11 A, vol. 33, pp. 131 - 131v.

Vaillant settled among the Senecas.¹⁷

The re-opening of the Jesuit missions among these two nations heralds a reversal in traditional Iroquois policy. Without English support, and still menaced by the vastly more numerous Western tribes, the Iroquois were turning to the French for protection. These pro-French feelings, however, did not operate with the same intensity among each of the Five Nations but varied according to the geographic location of each one of them. They were weak among the Mohawks, the nation which lay closest to Albany and which, as a result, was the most subservient to the English. The Senecas, on the other hand, were the westernmost nation and also the one most exposed to the blows of the Western Indians. As a result, more than the others, they were obliged to cultivate the French alliance.¹⁸ It was among the Onondagas, who were sufficiently removed from both the English and the Western Indians, that an independent Iroquois policy had the best chances to develop. The Five Nations themselves realized this for it was among the Onondagas that the great annual council was always held. The other two nations, the Cayugas and Oneidas, were the least numerous and seldom appear to have been represented in the numerous delegations that visited Canada. Madame de Vaudreuil once stated that these two nations were tributary to the Onondagas and followed their lead in everything.¹⁹

The various tendencies just described shed some light on the

17. Callières au ministre, 4 novembre 1702, AC, C 11 A, vol. 20, p. 156.

18. Vaudreuil himself describes the Senecas as "la nation la plus attachée au François". Vaudreuil et Beauharnois au ministre, 17 novembre 1704, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, p. 15.

19. Mémoire de la marquise de Vaudreuil à Pontchartrain, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 31, p. 67v.

objectives the Iroquois wished to attain in demanding missionaries. The Senecas must have hoped that the great prestige these men enjoyed might afford them some protection against the Upper Nations, their ancestral enemies. The Onondagas, without overlooking this fundamental aim, may also have been interested by the possibility of playing one side off against the other. By apparently surrendering to French influence they might succeed in frightening the English into being more mindful of them than they had been in the past. Then, by pretending to waver in their resolve of keeping the missionaries, they might panic the French into further concessions.²⁰ This was Iroquois finesse at its best but it should not be allowed to obscure the basic policy of the whole Confederacy, with the possible exception of the Mohawks. Should they succeed in obtaining the necessary protection from the English or, independently, manage to eliminate the menace of the Western tribes, they would be in a position to dispense with the French. Conversely, as long as the Western Indians threatened their security and the English refused them the protection they required, the Five Nations would be obliged to observe the treaty of 1701.

New York was undoubtedly familiar with the mainsprings of Iroquois policy after 1701. Still, this province was slow to move despite the fact that its governors had developed a comprehensive policy designed to bolster its influence among the Five Nations.

20. The French had gradually become aware of the Iroquois' game. "Ce sont les plus sages et les plus politiques de tous les sauvages," it was observed in 1715. "Ils sont très braves et se trouvant placés entre les François et les Anglois ils savent parfaitement profiter de ce voisinage en tirant des présents des deux nations qu'ils trouvent le moyen de mettre souvent en inquiétude." Observations sur la lettre de Ramezay et Bégon, 13 septembre 1715, AM, B 1, vol. 8, p. 255v.

This policy called for the settling of Protestant ministers among these Indians and for the building of forts in their villages, to be garrisoned with English soldiers.²¹ The main purpose of this plan, besides preserving the Iroquois in the English interest, was not to drive them to war. As much as New France, New York was war-weary and furthermore, obtaining very little from England by way of material help.²² Rather it aimed at providing a solution to the most pressing problem facing New York in the early eighteenth century - a decayed fur trade. It must be realized that the losses suffered by the Iroquois during the previous war had not only made them less formidable from a military standpoint but also impaired their efficiency as hunters and middlemen in the fur trade. In one year of Dutch rule, for instance, 66,000 beaver pelts had been exported from Albany. In 1699, exports had dwindled to 15,241. "T'is a sign that our Five Nations are mightily diminished" reflected Bellomont.²³ Alternate sources of supply had to be found and the governors of New York were hoping that, by following the policy just outlined, they might pressure the Iroquois into allowing the Western Indians to come to Albany. Had this plan gone into effect, English pressure on the West would have begun precisely at the time when New France as will presently be explained was relaxing its grip on that region. Furthermore, the presence of English soldiers among the

21. Conference of Earl Bellomont with the Five Nations, August 26, 1700, NYCD, vol. 4, pp. 727 - 734.

22. Cornbury to the Council of Trade and Plantations, September 9, 1703, CSPA 1702 - 1703, p. 673.

23. Bellomont to the Lords of Trade, November 28, 1700, NYCD, vol. 4, p. 789.

Iroquois would have greatly reduced the menace of the Western Indians, without which the treaty of 1701 was hardly worth the paper it was written on. The situation of the French colony would have become extremely critical.

The apathy of Albany rather than Iroquois opposition explains why this policy did not go into effect at once. The Iroquois themselves were favorable to the plan, for they were now more concerned with obtaining protection than with unrealistically trying to preserve their monopoly on the Albany fur trade.²⁴ The merchants of that city, however, preferred a solution less expensive than one which involved building forts and maintaining garrisons. They were lacking in beaver at a time when a huge surplus was available in Canada on account of the saturated condition of the French market. Contraband between the two colonies had begun as early as the 1670's. Under these new conditions it increased enormously and proved a powerful deterrent to war between Canada and New York. Indeed, Vaudreuil may soon have realized that it was only this illicit trade which could save the colony from complete bankruptcy.

The situation which greeted Vaudreuil in 1703 where New York and the Iroquois were concerned differed considerably from the

24. In 1700, the Iroquois told Bellomont that if the King of England would support them against their enemies "the farr nations" they would break off all correspondence with the French. *Ibid.*, p. 729. In 1701, they told lieutenant-governor Nanfan that if the French made any attempt to come into their country, they hoped he would send some of his men to countermine them. *Ibid.*, p. 905. In 1710, they informed Hunter that they would be glad to have missionaries and garrisons in their villages which were very much exposed to the enemy by whom they were surrounded on all sides. CSPA 1710 - 1711, p. 496.

one which had obtained under Frontenac. The weakened Five Nations were casting about for protection and seeking to extricate themselves from the position in which they had been placed in 1701. Because of the destitute condition of the colony, the historic alliance with the Western tribes now loomed as the most important factor in keeping the Iroquois in awe. This alliance, however, was threatened from several directions at once: by the governors of New York who wished to revive Thomas Dongan's attempts to bring the French allies into the economic orbit of their own province; by the bankrupt condition of the beaver trade which was eroding the economic basis of the Western Indians' alliance with the French; finally by the restrictive policy developed by the ministry of the marine since 1696, a policy which considerably weakened French control of the West.

This restrictive system had come into existence on May 21, 1696, as an effort on the part of the home authorities to curb excessive trading in beaver. It aimed at nothing less than cutting off this commerce at its source. All congés and permissions were abolished and the garrisons were ordered to withdraw from the posts of Michilimackinac, St. Joseph des Miamis and Fort Frontenac. In the wake of this announcement, the colonial administrators quickly pointed out that it was highly important to retain these settlements in order to preserve the Western Indians in the French interest and maintain harmony among them. As a result of this argument, on April 28, 1697, the edict was modified to the extent of allowing retention of the three posts involved.²⁵

25. Ordonnance pour la conservation des postes de Frontenac, de Michilimackinac et de St. Joseph des Miamis en Canada, 28 avril 1697, AC, B, vol. 19, p. 264; Ordonnance du Roy portant défense à tous officiers, soldats et autres de faire la traite avec les sauvages dans la profondeur des bois, 28 avril 1697, AC, F 3, vol. 8, p. 25.

The garrisons, however, were strictly forbidden to trade with the Indians, and because of this restriction the modifying edict remained a dead letter. The governor and intendant wrote that since the men had found it impossible to subsist without trade, they had elected to return to the colony.²⁶

The West, however, was not completely abandoned. The Jesuits kept their missions at Michilimackinac, St. Joseph des Miamis, Green Bay, and the Illinois country.²⁷ Several coureurs de bois elected to defy the edict and stay on in those territories rather than return to the colony and the humdrum of a settled way of life. A number of posts also subsisted, notably le Sueur's on the Upper Mississippi, la Forest and Henri de Tonty's in the Illinois country,²⁸ Fort Frontenac, which was retained as a depot where the Iroquois might satisfy their needs, and possibly one or two others at Chicago and Kaministigoya. French influence had nevertheless been dealt a crippling blow by the edict. The renegade coureurs, although they sometimes played a useful economic role by acting as agents for Canadian merchants,²⁹ were a permanent source of lawlessness and disorder. The Jesuit missionaries, by themselves, could not maintain order among the Indians. Nonetheless,

26. Frontenac et Champigny au ministre, 19 octobre 1697, AC, C 11 A, vol. 15, p. 41; it was claimed at a later date that Michilimackinac and St-Joseph had not been reestablished because "il en auroit coûté des sommes très considérables pour envoyer par des canots qui n'auroient point fait la traite les besoins de ceux qui auroient été en garnison." Observation sur la guerre des Renards, s.d., AM, B 1, vol. 8, pp. 250 - 250v.

27. See Extrait de la lettre écrite à Vaudreuil par le père Chardon, religieux missionnaire de la compagnie de Jésus à la rivière St. Joseph aux Miamis, 18 octobre 1705, AC, F 5 A, vol. 3, pp. 168 - 168v; on the missions in the Illinois country, see M. Giraud, Histoire de la Louisiane française, vol. I, pp. 48 - 56.

28. Etienne Carheil, S.J., à [Champigny], 30 octobre 1702, AN, M, carton 204, dossier 4, unpaginated.

29. d'Aigremont au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, p. 71v.

by destroying French civil authority in the West, the edict of 1696 had greatly enhanced the power and influence of this religious order. For the duration of Vaudreuil's administration its members would wage a determined battle to preserve this situation.³⁰ As for the surviving posts, they had little influence on events in the West. By their geographic location they were on the fringes of the Western domain and their staffs, with the exception of Fort Frontenac's, apparently consisted of nothing more than irregularly appointed commanding officers.³¹ The entire question of the West, however, soon acquired a novel character when Antoine la Mothe-Cadillac came forward with his project for a settlement at Detroit.

Until the edict of 1696 obliged him to return to the colony, Cadillac had been commanding officer at Michilimackinac. There he had found himself in the heart of the beaver country and realized sizeable profits from his private trade in this commodity.³² There was no room for such activities in the reconstructed West and a lucrative career had apparently come to an untimely end. Quite understandably, Cadillac was determined to avoid this. Extremely clever, and no less unscrupulous, he presented the court with a series of memoirs exposing the advantages to be gained from a settlement at Detroit. By 1708 it would have been made quite clear that in submitting these reports Cadillac had been principally, if not solely, motivated by the hope of creating a

30. See below, chapters VIII and X.

31. Vaudreuil stated in 1716 that a commanding officer had been maintained among the Illinois since 1701. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 31 octobre 1716, AC, C 11 A, vol. 36, pp. 65v - 66.

32. W.J. Eccles, Frontenac, the Courtier Governor, p. 315.

new career for himself in the West. But there were few indications of this in 1699 and 1700. With a touch of genius Cadillac had understood that a new temper was prevailing at court and each one of his arguments was carefully designed to exploit it.

What were these arguments? At that time Louisiana was being founded and France was in an imperialistic mood. Cadillac capitalized on those feelings by pointing out that Detroit was ideally situated to prevent English westward expansion. The war with the Iroquois had also just ended although no peace treaty had yet been signed. Detroit, Cadillac assured, would be a guarantee of peace in years to come. From this convenient location the French could swoop down on the Five Nations and destroy them at a moment's notice. To attain these objectives, however, Detroit would have to be more than a simple post built along traditional lines. It would have to be a colony in its own right where a considerable body of Frenchmen, civilians and soldiers, would settle and where all the Western allies would relocate. The latter alone, Cadillac estimated, would constitute an army of four or five thousand men, poised to strike a hammer blow at the Iroquois.

These arguments alone carried weight but Cadillac had several others in store designed to appeal to two fundamental aims of French colonial policy - civilizing the Indians and curbing the coueurs des bois. A colony at Detroit would permanently bring the savages under a French and Catholic influence, and to promote this end he even suggested establishing an Ursuline convent to Frenchify the Indian girls. Furthermore, all the Indians being assembled

at Detroit, it would be unprofitable for the French to roam the woods in their search for furs. The new settlement would become the great clearing house of the fur trade, where transactions with the Indians could be easily controlled and purged of their immoral overtones.

Cadillac also developed economic arguments. Realizing that the French market was saturated with beaver he guaranteed that during two years, from 1700 to 1702, no beaver pelts at all would reach the colony. During this period the Indians would be far too busy relocating at Detroit from scattered points in the West to find time for hunting. Moreover, while he asked that the twenty-five congés be re-established, he specified that they should be drawn only on Detroit and be made out for a period of two years. This, together with the work to be done at Detroit, would prevent the beneficiaries from returning to Canada before 1702. Finally, as a guarantee of permanence, he thought that Detroit should be made into an independent government. At this time this request caused no eyebrow raising. Still, it was a harbinger of things to come.³³

There was yet another economic argument which, oddly enough, does not appear in this memoir but which Cadillac appears to have pressed orally during his visits to the court. Detroit, unlike Michilimackinac, was situated in a region where menues pellete-ries rather than beaver abounded. A settlement at Detroit seemed to offer the alluring possibility of reconstructing the entire

33. Projet du sr. de la Mothe-Cadillac pour le Canada, 1699, AC, C 11 E, vol. 14, pp. 34 - 36v.

colonial economy around these furs.³⁴

Such were the arguments, some of them sound, most of them utopic, which gave birth to Detroit. The colonial administrators, who were asked to examine this report, accorded it a mixed reception. Champigny ridiculed the idea of establishing Ursulines in the wilderness and argued that even if Cadillac should succeed in gathering all the western tribes at Detroit, they would be at each others' throats in no time at all. Moreover, the intendant distrusted Cadillac and entertained serious doubts on his ulterior motives.³⁵ As for Callières, he approved of the project on the whole although he detected two grave weaknesses in it. In the first place the Iroquois might take offense at a settlement built on territory they considered as their hunting grounds. Secondly, and here he was getting at the basic flaw, the Detroit settlement would draw the Western Indians very close to the settlements of the Five Nations. This proximity would facilitate the growth of trade relations between them and the Iroquois and this political intercourse might ultimately serve as the basis for a political connection. Much more important than Detroit, he thought, was the re-occupation of the ancient posts and the re-establishment of the congés. The congé system he advocated, however, differed

34. Mémoire de M. de la Mothe-Cadillac touchant l'établissement du Détroit de Québec, 14 novembre 1704, AC, C 11 E, vol. 14, p. 169. On this aspect of the settlement, Champigny commented: "C'estoit l'office de cet établissement que d'empescher de faire des castors. Les premières pelleteries du Détroit ont esté bien vendues, les secondes beaucoup moins." Ibid., p. 148v.

35. Extrait du mémoire de la Mothe-Cadillac avec annotations de Champigny, 20 octobre 1699, AC, C 11 A, vol. 17, pp. 101 - 103; la Mothe-Cadillac au ministre, s.d., AC, C 11 E, vol. 14, p. 40v.

from the one which had existed under Frontenac. The beneficiary would no longer be free to trade where he wished. On each congé would appear the name of the post where he would be obliged to carry out his trade, under the supervision of the commanding officer. Despite the condition of the beaver trade, Callières thought it would be poor politics to abandon the numerous tribes inhabiting the West. "Personne ne peut disconvenir," he warned, "que tost ou tard nos sauvages tomberont sous la domination de Sa Ma'té ou bien sous celle du Roy d'Angleterre."³⁶

Unlike the veterans of Canadian affairs, who showed either hostility or reserve toward the Detroit project, the minister for his part had been favorable impressed. Cadillac, it is important to note, was promising to do nothing less than reconcile the economic policy of 1696 with the imperialistic policy of 1699 - 1700, which had already resulted in the foundation of Louisiana. Better men than Pontchartrain would have been seduced by such a prospect. In the King's memoir of 1700 the governor and intendant were told that unless "inconvéniens invincibles" were discovered, the project was to be put through. New France would thereby strengthen her grip on the Great Lakes; the English, who seemed on the verge of founding their own establishment in that area, would be held back; the French would preserve the friendship of the Indians and the coureurs des bois would be brought under control.³⁷ Briefly, Detroit was expected to play much the same role in the

36. Mémoire de Callières pour répondre à celui de la Mothe-Cadillac, s.d., AC, C 11 E, vol. 14, pp. 53 - 54v.

37. Mémoire du Roy à Callières et Champigny, s.d. AC, B, vol. 22, pp. 110 - 111v.

area of the Great Lakes as Louisiana on the Lower Mississippi. As a result of these two new settlements it was assumed that both regions would be largely closed to ^{the} English.

Except for the twenty five congés which were to remain abolished, Cadillac had succeeded in having his project adopted and on June 2, 1701, he left Montreal with one hundred men to begin the settlement.³⁸ He had also succeeded in something else which was of fundamental importance. The founder of Detroit was well aware of the legitimate opposition his plans had aroused, especially in Montreal, and he feared for the worst should decisions affecting his interests be taken in the colony. Cleverly, he advised Pontchartrain that since Canada was full of intrigue and cabals, Detroit would fail unless the minister took it under his personal protection.³⁹ With this argument he won Pontchartrain's support and it kept him afloat long after he was discredited in Canada. The following marginal comment, made by the minister at a time when his patience with the founder of Detroit was beginning to wear thin, reveals the nature of his relations with Cadillac up to that time: "Mauvais raisonnement... je me laisseray enfin de le soutenir avec toutes ces sortes d'indépendence."⁴⁰

38. la Mothe-Cadillac au ministre, 25 septembre 1702, AC, C 11 E, vol. 14, p. 118v.

39. "Vous ne devez jamais espérer que cette affaire réussisse si elle est mise en délibération sur les lieux. C'est un pays de caballes et d'intrigues... la Mothe [Cadillac usually wrote in the third person.] n'est pas le maître des esprits ni des Puissances du Canada. Elles savent bien lui ordonner de se taire quand il leur plaît et c'est à luy d'obéir. Il n'y a que votre autorité et vos ordres qui puissent aplanir toutes ces difficultés." la Mothe-Cadillac au ministre, s.d., AC, C 11 E, vol. 14, p. 43v.

40. la Mothe-Cadillac au ministre, [abst.] 10 et 15 septembre et 1 octobre 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 27, p. 145.

As far as Vaudreuil was concerned, Cadillac's presence at Detroit greatly complicated an already difficult situation. By the edict of 1696, the governor had been deprived of two of the major prerogatives enjoyed by his predecessors: the distribution of the twenty five congés and the management of the western posts. His authority over the West was further curtailed by the foundation of Detroit, a development which left the conduct of Indian affairs largely at the discretion of Cadillac. The latter's subordination to Vaudreuil was more theoretical than real. In practice, he was responsible to Pontchartrain whose full support he enjoyed. Even before Vaudreuil's appointment as governor, Cadillac's attempts to force the Jesuits to abandon their mission at Michilimackinac⁴¹ and his efforts to discredit the Company of the Colony to whom Detroit had been granted,⁴² indicate that he intended using his power to become the sole master of the West.

The condition of the beaver trade, which had such an important bearing on Iroquois affairs and on Western policy, also affected New France's relations with New England. Here again it was an Indian nation, the Abenakis, which played the leading role. These Abenakis had traditionally sided with Canada in her wars with New England during the seventeenth century. In fact, they were perhaps the most faithful of all the French allies. Unlike the Western Indians, whose ties with the French were primarily economic, those of the Abenakis were largely religious and as a result the Jesuits enjoyed complete ascendancy over them. William Dudley, governor

41. la Mothe-Cadillac au ministre, 25 septembre 1702, AC, C 11 E, vol. 14, p. 122v.

42. la Mothe-Cadillac au ministre, 31 août 1703, Ibid., p. 142v.

of Massachusetts, was aware of this. When war broke out in 1702 he personally visited the Abenaki settlements in the hope of persuading those Indians to abide by the terms of the peace treaty they had concluded with the English in 1699. He assured them "of trade and everything they want if they will keep off from our English settlements during the war." Dudley seemed satisfied with the outcome of these meetings. "Nothing but the French priests amongst them will put them out of temper towards us," he concluded. ⁴³

Still, the Abenakis appeared prepared to overlook the advantages attaching to a peace with the English. As soon as war broke out several deputies appeared at Quebec, eagerly asking for Callières' instructions. They apologized for having listened to Dudley but assured the French governor that their heart was not in the promises they had made to him. Callières was the only one they wished to obey. The latter told them in reply that since the French and the English were now at war, they were free to attack New England and could count on his support. By means of French ammunition and the booty of their raids he expressed the hope that they might live even more comfortably than in peace time. He complimented them on their zeal for Catholicism, "la seule [re-
ligion] qui puisse vous conduire à la béatitude éternelle et la chose à laquelle on doit songer préférablement à toute autre", and reminded them that it should always keep them faithful to the French. ⁴⁴

43. Dudley to the Council of Trade and Plantations, August 5, 1702, CSPA 1702 - 1703, p. 501.

44. Parolles des sauvages Abénakis des quatre villages de l'Acadie à M. le chevalier de Callières ... Réponses de Callières, 1 octobre 1702, AC, F 3, vol. 2, pp. 277 - 279.

While the Abenakis had appeared well-disposed toward the French during their visit to Quebec, they began to waver in their resolve of warring on New England soon after returning to their lands in the Maine wilderness. In December, 1702, Jacques François de Brouillan, governor of Acadia, suddenly reported that the Abenakis had deserted the French alliance.⁴⁵ Although this view was unduly pessimistic, there can be no doubt that enthusiasm for the French cause was waning among the Eastern Indians. At first, Brouillan blamed this development on their missionaries,⁴⁶ feeling perhaps that they were not promoting the war with sufficient vigor. The following year, however, he explained in a different way the changing sentiments of the Abenakis. "Ces sauvages," he reported, "ne sont pas disposés à faire la guerre aux Anglois et ils paroissent avoir dessein de demeurer neutres parce que les François sont hors de portée de leur donner ce qu'ils ont besoin et qu'ils ne vont plus chercher les pelleteries qui est la seule ressource qu'ils ont pour avoir leur nécessaire."⁴⁷ It devolved upon Vaudreuil to discover some way of counterbalancing the economic enticements of the English alliance, now magnified by the collapse of the Canadian beaver trade.

Such was the situation facing Vaudreuil in 1703. On the Eastern frontier he had to maintain the Abenakis in the French interest despite the economic advantages which attached to an alliance with New England. In like manner, he had to prevent the numerous tribes

45. Brouillan au ministre, décembre 1702, AC, C 11 D, vol. 4, p. 212v.

46. Loc. cit.

47. Brouillan au ministre, 21 octobre 1703, Ibid., p. 228v.

inhabiting the region of the Great Lakes from becoming economically dependent on Albany. The task facing the governor in those quarters was far more difficult than along the New England border. The religious tie, one of France's great assets in their dealings with the natives, did not operate as powerfully among the Western Indians as among the Abenakis. The problem was further complicated by the effects of the edict of 1696, by the founding of Detroit, a development which Callières and Champigny had viewed with misgivings, and by the preponderant influence Cadillac had gained in all matters of Western policy. Finally, along the New York frontier, Vaudreuil had to maintain the Iroquois in the state of neutrality to which they had been reduced in 1701. This neutrality did not depend uniquely on the French sparing the New York frontier but was also related to conditions in the East and West. Iroquois policy, for instance, was closely tied in with that of the Upper Indians. New York's emerging pacifism, the second basic factor which made the neutrality of the Five Nations possible, might be considerably altered if Massachusetts decided in favor of an aggressive policy against the French. The problems facing Vaudreuil, in the Eastern, Western, and New York zones, therefore, were not independent but rather closely related to one another. The governor had to bear this in mind as he appraised the situation in the early summer of 1703.

CHAPTER IV

The Truce with New York

From the very beginning of his administration Vaudreuil considered the preservation of peace with the Iroquois as the most important task facing him as governor. This attitude would continue unchanged through ten years of war.¹ Vaudreuil, it must be emphasized, had first come into contact with the Iroquois in the late 1680's, when they were at the height of their power. He had witnessed the damage and bloodshed they had caused during their war on the colony. These events had made a profound impression on him and, to a great extent, shaped his subsequent outlook toward them. Thus, although the Five Nations were weakened by the time he became governor in 1703, he still regarded them as the colony's most dangerous enemies and never doubted that they would resume their war on Canada if presented with an opportunity to do so. Although such an attitude was partly emotional in character it also had deep roots in reality. The 1,400 warriors of the Confederacy still represented a sizeable force and their diplomacy during the War of the Spanish Succession indicates that they had not abandoned their aggressive designs. Realizing this, Pontchartrain gave Vaudreuil's peace policy unqualified support until 1708. At that time, in a desperate

1. Vaudreuil au ministre, 3 avril 1704, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, p. 32; Vaudreuil au ministre, 19 octobre 1705, Ibid., p. 235; Vaudreuil au ministre, 5 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 28, p. 104v; Vaudreuil au ministre, 8 novembre 1711, AC, C 11 A, vol. 32, p. 67v.

effort to stem the contraband trade between Montreal and Albany, he completely reversed his position and began to urge war on New York.

Vaudreuil became governor at a time when the English were renewing their attempts to convince the Senecas and Onondagas to expel the Jesuit missionaries from their villages. One month before his death, Callières had advised Pontchartrain that he was sending twenty Frenchmen among these two nations in an effort to counter English pressure.² Should the missionaries be forced to leave, he feared that the Iroquois would renew the war. As soon as Vaudreuil succeeded Callières he distributed gifts to some of the chiefs, thinking this would be the best way to impress upon the Iroquois the advantage of good relations with the French.³ He also decided to bolster the French representation among the Senecas and Onondagas by sending Chabert de Joncaire and le Moyne de Maricourt to winter among them. These two men, who had played a prominent part in the negotiations leading up to the peace treaty of 1701, were held in deep respect by the Iroquois and commanded considerable influence among them. Joncaire was the expert on Seneca affairs and it is among this nation that he rendered his greatest services. As for Maricourt, he toiled almost exclusively among the Onondagas. Upon his death in 1704 Vaudreuil replaced him by his brother Longueuil. The choice proved judicious and, during his entire administration, Joncaire and Longueuil together with la Porte de Louvigny, the Western specialist, were Vaudreuil's most useful collaborators and the

2. Callières et Beauharnois au ministre, 25 avril 1703, AC, C 11 A, vol. 21, pp. 42 - 42v.

3. Vaudreuil et Beauharnois au ministre, 15 novembre 1703, AC, C 11 A, vol. 21, pp. 5v - 6.

outstanding members of a consistently brilliant diplomatic staff.

By and large in 1703 the situation favored the French. By the fall of that year Vaudreuil learned that the citizens of Albany would almost certainly agitate in favor of a truce with Canada.⁴ A raid just carried out by Beaubassin on New England⁵ and the fact that they had been unable to dislodge the missionaries from among the Iroquois probably led them to expect the worst in case of a new war. New York's failure to take a bold stand at this time was reflected in the speeches of the Iroquois delegation which appeared in Montreal in the fall of 1703. The Senecas moved even closer to the French by making Vaudreuil master of their land.⁶ The Onondaga Teganissorence, on behalf of the Five Nations, spoke strongly in favor of peace and even offered to mediate a peace treaty between Canada and New York. The governor replied that he would transmit this offer to the king but he had already decided at this time to follow Callières' policy of non-provocation along the New York border.⁷ The Iroquois themselves were informed of this in 1704 when another Onondaga chief, la Grande Terre, told Vaudreuil that Peter Schuyler wished to conclude a general truce which would have included Massachusetts. "Je n'ay rien répondu à la Grande Terre", wrote Vaudreuil, "sinon

4. Vaudreuil au ministre, 14 novembre 1703, AC, C 11 A, vol. 21, p. 58v.

5. See below p. 98.

6. Parolles du chef nommé Oronyatek, Sonnontouan, à M. de Vaudreuil, 25 octobre 1703, AC, C 11 A, vol. 21, p. 60.

7. Parolles du chef nommé Teganissorence au nom des Cinq Nations, 24 octobre 1703, AC, C 11 A, vol. 21, pp. 72 - 73. Referring to this speech, Vaudreuil told Pontchartrain of his "dessein de ne point faire attaquer les Anglois de ce costé là de crainte d'attirer les Iroquois contre Montréal." Vaudreuil et Beauharnois au ministre, 15 novembre 1703, AC, C 11 A, vol. 21, p. 6v.

que si Pitre Sculle voullait me faire des propositions il fal-
loit qu'il m'envoyast un exprès... que cependant pour l'amour
de luy je promettois de n'envoyer aucun party dans le gouvernement
d'Orange qu'ils n'eussent commencés les premiers."⁸

New York had failed to get anywhere with the Iroquois in 1703;
indeed, if anything, these Indians had drawn still closer to the
French. By 1704 the situation was even worse. William Dudley,
governor of Massachusetts Bay, was now clamoring for an all-out
attack on Canada, a policy which, if followed, would necessarily
have involved New York in war. French success among the Iroquois
had alarmed at least one English official into thinking that the
Five Nations were on the point of abandoning the English and going
over to the French.⁹ These woes, both real and imaginary, should
have convinced New York of the necessity of offering positive
inducements to the Iroquois in order to rally them to their cause.
All they were prepared to do, however, was to summon a general
assembly at Onondaga where, once again, they asked the Iroquois
to expel the missionaries and to try to persuade the Abenakis to
bury the hatchet. The New Yorkers also tried to further their
commercial interests on this occasion by asking the Iroquois to
allow the Western Indians to come to Albany.¹⁰ Vaudreuil, who had
been advised of this assembly, was powerfully represented by Jon-
caire, Longueuil and Father Vaillant. The English were making
very little headway in these negotiations when an unforeseen event

8. Vaudreuil au ministre, 16 novembre 1704, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22,
p. 37v.

9. Colonel Quarry to the Council of Trade and Plantations, October 15,
1703, CSPA 1702 - 1703, p. 736.

10. Vaudreuil et Beauharnois au ministre, 17 novembre 1704, AC, C 11
A, vol. 22, pp. 13 - 14.

took matters completely out of their hands. In the west a group of Miamis had attacked a Seneca hunting party and killed a few of their number. Once more the Iroquois were pushed towards Vaudreuil.

By virtue of the treaty of 1701 the governor of Canada now found himself placed in the position of arbitrator in this quarrel and the task facing him was anything but easy. On the one hand there was the possibility of these hereditary enemies going to war against each other, or they might come to terms independently of Vaudreuil. Both alternatives were equally dangerous. Peace not only had to be maintained but it had to be maintained as a result of Vaudreuil's efforts. As soon as this incident was brought to his attention Joncaire and Vaillant went to the Senecas while Jean-Baptiste Vincennes, an officer in high esteem among the Miamis, was sent to these Indians to inquire into the motives of their seemingly unjustified attack and urge them to compensate the Iroquois.¹¹ These measures appeared to satisfy the Seneca delegation which visited the colony in May 1704, but hardly was this first crisis brought under control than a new and far graver one arose. In the summer of that same year a group of Ottawas ambushed a large Seneca party in the vicinity of Fort Frontenac. In the ensuing battle thirty of the Iroquois were killed or carried off as prisoners. Once again the shadow of war hung over the West.

In accordance with the treaty of 1701 the Iroquois had not struck back but had laid their grievances before the governor.

11. Ibid., pp. 14v - 15; Vaudreuil au ministre, 16 novembre 1704, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, pp. 34v - 35; Parolles de M. le marquis de Vaudreuil envoyées par M. de Vincennes, 1 juillet 1704, AC, F 3, vol. 2, pp. 307 - 307v.

The latter was now obliged to promise that either the Ottawas would atone for their wrongdoings or that he would join up with the Senecas to inflict punishment on them.¹² The situation in which Vaudreuil found himself illustrates the double-edged character of the treaty. It kept the Iroquois at peace but it could also oblige the French to turn against their allies. The Iroquois were fully aware of this and now attempted to force this disastrous alternative upon Vaudreuil.

The governor's tactic was basically the same as in the Miami incident. It was now too late in the year to send anyone to Michilimackinac where the Ottawas had retreated but with the first signs of spring Louvigny was sent off with gifts to buy back the prisoners.¹³ Meantime Joncaire had wintered among the Senecas to counter the efforts of a few Englishmen who were attempting to use this incident to turn the Iroquois against the French. Claude de Ramezay, the governor of Montreal, who was then involved in a bitter quarrel with Vaudreuil, scorned this gentle approach, saying that a show of severity towards the Ottawas would be much preferable.¹⁴ But with the possibility of a new war hanging on the outcome of Louvigny's mission the time was hardly auspicious for experiments in severity when bribery was known to be efficient. By this method Louvigny succeeded in retrieving the prisoners and in persuading the Ottawa chiefs to follow him to Montreal. As soon as Louvigny arrived in the colony with the prisoners Vaudreuil

12. Parolles des sauvages Sonnontouans à M. le gouverneur-général et réponses, 12 septembre 1704, AC, F 3, vol. 2, pp. 315 - 316.

13. Vaudreuil et Beauharnois au ministre, 3 mai 1705, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, pp. 168v - 169.

14. Ramezay au ministre, 12 octobre 1705, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, p. 334v.

summoned the Senecas and by early August representatives of all the Iroquois nations except the Mohawks had arrived in the city. By the middle of the month, however, the Ottawa chiefs had not yet put in an appearance. Despite the fact that they now had their prisoners back the Senecas attempted to manoeuvre Vaudreuil into joining up with them for a punitive expedition against the Ottawas:

Souvenez-vous mon Père de la parole que l'on nous a donnée à la paix que si quelqu'un de vos enfans en frapoit un autre qu'on se joindroit ensemble pour exterminer la nation qui avoit frappé...

Cependant voila plusieurs fois que nous avons été frappé sans qu'il paroisse que notre Père ait pris notre party. Si nous avons fait la même chose que les Outaouais notre Père nous l'auroit bien fait ressentir.¹⁵

The governor was able to resist this demand by promising that he would prevail upon the Ottawas to render full satisfaction.¹⁶ By this time, moreover, the Ottawa chiefs had finally arrived and after waiting for some time outside Montreal to know if Vaudreuil was willing to receive them they were admitted to his presence. Arrangements were now made for the dead Senecas to be replaced by slaves and the reconciliation was sealed at a banquet where assurances of peace were renewed. The Ottawas themselves were not allowed to forget the promise they made on this occasion. A canoe was dispatched to Michilimackinac in 1706 to bring back some of the slaves and the Ottawas themselves brought the last three to

15. Parolles des Iroquois à M. le gouverneur-général, 16 août 1705, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, pp. 269 - 269v.

16. Réponses de m. le Gouverneur général aux Sonnontouans et autres chefs des quatre nations iroquoises, Ibid., 268v.

Montreal in July 1708. On that occasion they begged that the Iroquois might now consider themselves satisfied since they themselves had made every effort to atone for their misdeed.¹⁷ Thus, after four years, the episode was closed and the manner in which it was settled not only constituted a brilliant success for Vaudreuil but may also have disappointed the Iroquois. Their behaviour during their visit to Montreal in August 1705 suggests that they were hoping the incident could be used to spark a war in which Vaudreuil would have been obliged to side with them. But no war had occurred and pressure from the West continued unrelieved.

It is interesting to speculate on what might have happened had the Ottawas defied the governor and refused to satisfy the Senecas. The treaty of 1701 clearly decreed that in such a case the French were obliged to join forces with the injured party to obtain redress by force. But undoubtedly, Vaudreuil would have done everything in his power to avoid having to carry out such a suicidal obligation. Had the Iroquois nonetheless persisted in their desire for revenge they would have been obliged to attack the Ottawas unassisted. Despite the dangers involved in fighting a war under such circumstances, sentiments of honour and injured pride might well have spurred them on. "Cette nation [est] naturellement fière," reported Vaudreuil, "et ne [veut] pas qu'on puisse leur reprocher qu'ils souffrent la moindre lacheté."¹⁸ In such

17. Parolles des Outaouais de Missilimackinac à M. le marquis de Vaudreuil, 23 juillet 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 28, pp. 206 - 207.

18. Vaudreuil au ministre, 19 octobre 1705, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, p. 204v.

a case, Vaudreuil, despite Pontchartrain's instructions to abandon the Ottawas to the wrath of the Iroquois,¹⁹ would have been obliged to intervene even at the cost of becoming involved in another war. Without his aid the Ottawas would have either been destroyed or, angry with the French for not assisting them, concluded an independent agreement with the Iroquois. The consequences would have been disastrous for the colony, no matter how Vaudreuil might have decided to act. It is therefore more than fortunate that the Ottawas agreed to do what he and the Senecas demanded of them.

In the summer of 1706 an incident at Detroit presented the Iroquois with another and even more favorable opportunity for securing their vulnerable western flank.

The Ottawas settled at Detroit²⁰ had then come to blows with the Miamis and Hurons and in the skirmish that followed a French soldier and a missionary were killed. The smoke of battle had hardly cleared before the Hurons had gone to the Iroquois to ask for aid. At this time la Mothe-Cadillac was returning to his settlement after a prolonged absence and news of this incident reached him as he was progressing through Seneca country. Common sense alone should have convinced him of the necessity to isolate this family quarrel from Iroquois intrigue. Instead, he announced that he would wreak fearful vengeance on the Ottawas and invited

19. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 17 juin 1705, AC, B, vol. 27, pp. 64v - 65.

20. This branch of the Ottawas is not to be confused with the one settled at Michilimackinac which had ambushed the Senecas at fort Frontenac.

the Senecas to come along as spectators. The delighted Iroquois were only too glad to oblige and 120 of their warriors joined his convoy.²¹

The situation had now become critical. The Hurons' demand for aid, joined to Cadillac's careless words, might encourage the Iroquois to join forces with the Miamis and Hurons and then wage a war of extermination on the Ottawas. In fact this is precisely what they were hoping to do but they were shrewd enough to realize that a wedge would first have to be driven between Vaudreuil and the offending Ottawas. A Seneca delegation came down to Montreal and in a fiery speech designed to kindle the governor's anger, asked that he allow them to chastise the Ottawas.²² "Si je ne suivois, Monseigneur, que le premier mouvement qu'inspire la vengeance," wrote Vaudreuil, "je n'aurois pas ballancé à accepter la proposition des Iroquois."²³ Fortunately, by temperament, the governor was the opposite of impulsive, and further reflection convinced him of how necessary it was to prevent the Iroquois from interfering in this affair. As he told Pontchartrain, "Je considère que le huron, le miamis et l'Iroquois estant joins ensemble ils viendront à bout de l'Outtauois ... pour lors, n'ayant plus rien à lui opposer du costé d'en haut, l'Iroquois nous fera une guerre

21. Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 3 novembre 1706, AC, C 11 A, vol. 24, pp. 33v - 34v.

22. Parolles des Sonnontouans à M. le marquis de Vaudreuil, 23 août 1706, AC, C 11 A, vol. 24, pp. 251 - 251v.

23. Vaudreuil au ministre, 4 novembre 1706, AC, C 11 A, vol. 24, pp. 215 - 215v.

plus sanglante que jamais. Voilà Monseigneur les raisons que j'ai eu pour temporiser."²⁴

Should the Ottawas have been eliminated, the Iroquois would probably not have automatically renewed the war as Vaudreuil dramatically claimed. They would, however, have regained the freedom of action they completely lacked as they remained caught between English non-support and pressure from the West. As a result of Vaudreuil's policy, they could do little except scrupulously refrain from provocation and press for the continuation of Anglo - French peace.

This policy, however, was not all threat. It was rather a subtle blend of cajolery and menace designed to impress upon the Five Nations the usefulness of the French connection. Gifts were frequently distributed to these Indians and although the court repeatedly complained of the expense involved, the allowance for their purchase was never abolished.²⁵ In the province of New York, on the other hand, except when the governor visited Albany with the King's present, responsibility for the purchase of gifts rested with the Assembly which usually refused to vote the required sums. In 1708, Governor Cornbury informed the Board of Trade that the Iroquois had received no presents from

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 215v - 216v. What Vaudreuil was doing here was applying to a concrete case a general principle which is the basis of his entire Indian policy: "Toute la politique qu'on puisse avoir par raport aux sauvages est d'empescher la liaison des gens d'en haut, qui sont les outaouois et les gens des lacs, avec les Iroquois afin qu'en cas qu'un [sic] des deux nations voulust faire la guerre à cette colonie de luy opposer l'autre. C'est ce qui a esté exécuté du temps de la guerre aux Iroquois et qui a esté cause qu'elle a cessé par les différents partis que l'outaouois avoit toujours en campagne." Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 28, pp. 8 - 8v.

25. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Raudot, 30 juin 1707, AC, B, vol. 29, p. 37v; Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 15 novembre 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 25, pp. 12v - 13.

the English since 1702.²⁶ The Iroquois, like all the other Indian nations, also required blacksmiths to solve the mysteries of broken ironware and firearms. New York's failure to satisfy this need forced the Iroquois to accept one from Canada and was, according to Wraxall, "a great prejudice to the interests of this colony."²⁷ The fact that the French were in a position to provide all the important tribes with gifts and blacksmiths gave them a marked advantage over the English in Indian affairs. After the treaty of Utrecht, the English colonial authorities gradually became aware of the fact that French success in this field could basically be traced to a greater degree of State control which made it possible for Canada to distribute gifts, grant blacksmiths, interpreters and missionaries, build posts and staff them with garrisons. Thus, in February 1719, deputy-governor Keith of Pennsylvania strongly urged that England imitate the French "in making trade with the Indians a national concern."²⁸

While Vaudreuil was successfully containing the Iroquois the condition of the beaver trade was steadily deteriorating. In 1703, Goy, Pasquier and Bourlet, the three Paris financiers who had acted as the commissioners of the Company of the Colony since its formation in 1700,²⁹ had been forced to withdraw their support

26. Cornbury to the Council of Trade and Plantations, August 20, 1708, CSPA 1708 - 1709, p. 71.

27. Wraxall, p. 80.

28. Keith to Popple, February 16, 1719, CSPA 1719 - 1720, p. 40.

29. On the Company of the Colony see G. Frégault, "La Compagnie de la Colonie" Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa, vol. 30 (1960), pp. 5 - 29; 127 - 149.

owing to disastrous market conditions.³⁰ Denis Riverin, the Company's Paris agent, Champigny, the former intendant, and Pontchartrain had experienced considerable difficulty in finding new capital to back the enterprise but they finally managed to induce Goy to form a new partnership with two Parisian bankers, du Moulin and Mercier. The clauses of the contract, however, bore so hard on the colony that a cry of protest was heard around Canada as soon as they became known.³¹ Most serious was the clause which reduced to 150,000 livres the value of the bills of exchange which the new commissioners agreed to honour each year. Since the average annual value of the beaver crop varied between 180,000 and 200,000 livres tournois the company would have to refuse up to 50,000 livres annually.³² Just as serious was the clause which outlawed greasy beaver and obliged the Company to ship to France annually 80,000 livres weight of the dry and muscovy varieties. Hardly 45,000 livres weight of these types of pelt had been received by the Company since 1700, the directors pointed out.³³ But although greasy beaver was no longer acceptable in France the Company, for the moment, had not been relieved of the obligation of receiving it in Canada. The authorities may have judged that to take this step was to risk driving the Indians into the arms of the English. To provide the Company with some relief the price

30. Le ministre aux directeurs de la Compagnie de la Colonie, 14 juin 1704, AC, B, vol. 25, p. 157.

31. Traité des castors de Canada, 25 septembre 1703, AC, F 3, vol. 8, pp. 343 - 348.

32. Les directeurs de la Compagnie au ministre, 17 novembre 1704, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, p. 123v.

33. Loc. cit.

had been lowered to 40 sols per livre³⁴ and the dispatches of 1705 indicated that a further reduction was being contemplated.³⁵

It soon became evident that Goy, du Moulin and Mercier were either unable or unwilling to fulfill even the limited obligations called for by their contract. After honouring some of the bills of exchange drawn on them in 1703, they repudiated all those of 1704 and 1705.³⁶ Just as it appeared that the affairs of Canada were ruined beyond repair, another metropolitan association, that of Aubert, Néret and Gayot, unexpectedly came forward and agreed to underwrite the beaver trade. The ill-fated Company of the Colony was liquidated and its assets and liabilities transferred into the books of the new associates. The debt contracted by the late company was enormous. It amounted to no less than 1,397,936 livres.³⁷ As for the assets they consisted of little more than the huge backlog of greasy beaver which had been accumulating since the early 1690's. To provide Aubert, Néret and Gayot with an opportunity to sell these pelts, greasy beaver was banned from 1706 to 1712. During this six year period, the colony was obliged to ship annually to France 80,000 livres weight of dry and muscovy beaver which the associates agreed to purchase at 30 sols per livre, an all-time low.³⁸ The constant demand for dry beaver at this time is explained by the fact that both the dry and greasy types went into the fabrication of beaver hats.

34. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Beauharnois, 14 juin 1704, AC, B, vol. 25, p. 135; Vaudreuil et Beauharnois au ministre, 17 novembre 1704, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, p. 10v.

35. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 17 juin 1705, AC, B, vol. 27, pp. 64 - 64v.

36. Mémoire sur la nécessité de la vente générale des castors. 9 juin 1706, AC, B, vol. 27, pp. 252 - 252v.

37. Loc. cit.

38. Ibid., p. 255.

Only if Aubert, Néret and Gayot received the stipulated quantity of 80,000 livres would they find it possible to exhaust the backlog of greasy pelts. Should they receive less, they too might well be driven out of business.

Falling prices and irregular payment on the bills of exchange were not the only difficulties that plagued the Canadian beaver trade during this period. War conditions made matters still more difficult. Bills of exchange that did not go to protest were frequently acquitted in billets de monnaie on which the bearer lost 50%.³⁹ They were drawn on Paris instead of Bordeaux and la Rochelle where most of the trade goods were obtained and became payable only after the ships had sailed.⁴⁰ As a result of increases in freight and insurance rates made necessary by the hazards of war-time navigation, the price of trade goods had reached prohibitive levels.⁴¹ Briefly, the bankruptcy of the beaver trade, the disruption of navigation and the distress of French finance had combined to deal the Canadian merchants a series of devastating blows. The Albany traders had not failed to notice that they might profit from such a situation. On one occasion, in 1708, they supplied some Mohawks with merchandise and sent them to Montreal to trade it on their behalf. While the Montreal merchants looked on, these Iroquois traded their wares to a group of Ottawas recently arrived from the Upper Country and carried off two-thirds

39. J. et A.D. Raudot au ministre, [abst.] 8, 11, 12, 13 et 15 novembre 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, p. 91.

40. J. et A.D. Raudot au ministre, 12 novembre 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 26, p. 223v.

41. de Lino au ministre, 10 novembre 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, p. 141v; Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 28, p. 4.

of their beaver.⁴²

For the Canadian merchants, there was only one way out of this deplorable situation. In order to obtain a sufficient supply of inexpensive trade goods and adequate prices for their beaver they had to fall back on contraband. Engaging in this illicit trade was not particularly difficult, for beaver could be disposed of through a number of channels. Rather than send their pelts to Aubert, Néret and Gayot and receive a meagre 30 sols per livre in return, several merchants preferred to smuggle them into France and have their agents strike bargains with the hatmakers and buyers from Holland and Muscovy. Thus, in 1708, two Marseille merchants received fraudulently, by the vessel the St. Joseph, 52 bales of beaver weighing 200 livres each, for delivery to England and 14 others for Amsterdam.⁴³ According to Denis Rivérin, a certain contraband also went on with New England and Louisiana.⁴⁴ It was the illicit trade with Albany, however, which soon assumed the most considerable proportions. This city was close to Montreal, its market was stable although prices there had also shown a certain decline, and high quality trade goods, notably duffels and stroud, were available at reasonable rates. In 1707, Ramezay reported that the seigneur of Chambly had counted no less than 120 canoes making their way up the Richelieu River toward Albany. This represented 60,000 livres weight of beaver lost to the French.⁴⁵ Dwindling receipts at the Quebec stores provide some

42. Ramezay au ministre, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, pp. 2v - 4.

43. Aubert au ministre, 25 juin 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 28, p. 195.

44. Chefs concernant le Canada pour l'année 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 27, pp. 131v - 132.

45. Ramezay au ministre, 12 novembre 1707, Ibid., p. 5.

indication of the growth of contraband. In 1703, a good year, 130,000 livres weight had been received.⁴⁶ Three years later, in 1706, receipts were down to 49,233 livres.⁴⁷ The following year, a mere 7,000 livres trickled in.⁴⁸ Such a state of affairs was a grave threat to the operations of Aubert, Néret and Gayot.

Because of the type of methods used to carry on this illicit trade, little could be done to put a stop to it. To take their pelts to Albany the Canadian merchants used as carriers the Iroquois of the three missions of Sault St. Louis (Caughnawaga), Sault au Récollet and la Montagne. Since these Indians had traditionally enjoyed the privilege to trade where they wished, the pelts which they carried to Albany and the English merchandise which they took back to Montreal were immune from seizure. François d'Aigremont, the commissaire de la marine, pointed out that only violent methods could effectively stem this traffic. But, he warned, "Il est à craindre que cela ne les [the domiciled Indians] iritent de telle sorte qu'ils ne se déclarent contre nous pour peu qu'ils trouvent les Iroquois disposés à nous faire la guerre."⁴⁹ Vaudreuil especially was unwilling to employ methods that might alienate the domiciled Iroquois. Thus, while he did instruct Ramezay to take steps against contraband, he stressed that this should be done "en ménageant

46. Estat au vray des castors livrés au bureau..., s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 23, p. 66.

47. Compte rendu par Duplessis, agent et directeur de la compagnie de la colonie, des recettes et dépenses de 1706, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 27, pp. 78 - 78v.

48. Arrest concernant les intéressés en la compagnie de castor du Canada, 3 septembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, p. 388v.

49. d'Aigremont au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, p. 73v.

l'esprit des sauvages."⁵⁰ The governor himself carefully abode by this rule. On one occasion, a subordinate official of the district of Montreal uncovered a beaver cache in the woods adjoining the city. The pelts were at first confiscated but soon afterward the mission Indians came forward and claimed them as their property. Vaudreuil immediately ordered that the beaver be handed over to them.⁵¹

Although contraband had to be tolerated, the colonial administrators viewed the resulting situation with considerable alarm. It was feared that, as trade with the English became a fixed habit, the Indians would grow cool toward the French and ultimately abandon them. "On ne peut disconvenir," stated Charron bluntly, "que ceux qui auront le commerce auront aussy les sauvages, et s'ils ne sont point pour nous ils seront contre nous, n'ayant point d'autres amis que ceux qui leur donnent et leur font bon marché."⁵² To revive the Canadian trade, he urged that the French procure red and blue stroud, fabricated according to English specifications, and lower the price of their trade goods.⁵³ D'Aigremont thought it necessary to raise the price of beaver pelts to 40 sols.⁵⁴ On a number of occasions Ramezay suggested that the Crown subsidize the beaver trade by sending 40,000 livres tournois of trade goods to the colony annually.⁵⁵ Although these various proposals differed as

50. Ramezay au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, p. 230v.

51. Aubert au ministre, 17 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, p. 257v.

52. Mémoire où l'on propose ... les moyens de rétablir le commerce avec les sauvages de Canada, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 27, p. 123v.

53. Ibid., p. 126.

54. d'Aigremont au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, pp. 73v - 74.

55. Ramezay au ministre, 12 novembre 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 27, pp. 6 - 6v.

to means, all agreed on the urgent necessity of creating more favorable market conditions in order to stem contraband and draw the Indians back to Montreal.

No less than the local administrators, Pontchartrain was also disturbed by these developments. Denis Riverin, with whom he consulted on Canadian affairs, pointed out that while Aubert, Néret and Gayot required 500 bales of dry beaver annually, less than 400 had reached them in 1707. "S'il en arrivoit moins cette année les srs. Aubert et ses associés perdroient courage et que deviendrait alors la colonie?" he asked.⁵⁶ No less than the colonial agent, the minister dreaded the answer to this question. Should the associates abandon the enterprise, Canada would become entirely dependent on the French government for support. The lack of funds which made this prospect such a frightening one unfortunately also made it impossible to enact positive measures to help the colony, such as sending 40,000 livres of trade goods as Ramezay had suggested. The minister did press this solution upon Aubert, Néret and Gayot and asked Riverin to confer with them on the possibility of raising the price of beaver.⁵⁷ He also pointed out to the treasurers of the marine the necessity of honoring the bills of exchange drawn on them from Canada before the ships sailed for that colony, but he informed the Raudots that "le temps est si fascheux qu'on ne peut compter sur rien."⁵⁸ Meanwhile, the arrêt of July 24, 1706, which enacted severe penalties against contraband, was renewed on

56. Chefs concernant le Canada pour l'année 1707, s.d., Ibid., p. 132.

57. Ministre à Riverin, 3 juin 1708, AC, B, vol. 29, pp. 299v - 300.

58. Le ministre à J. et A.D. Raudot, 6 juin 1708, AC, B, vol. 29, pp. 318 - 318v.

June 25, 1707.⁵⁹ The request of the associates that they be allowed to place guards along the principal routes leading to the English settlements had been passed on to the colonial administrators and rejected by Pontchartrain on the strength of their adverse criticism.⁶⁰

Briefly, the only preventive measures taken against contraband were the arrêts of 1706 and 1707. Because of lack of funds the minister could do nothing else. These arrêts, however, could hardly do more than dent the surface of the problem; only cheap merchandise and an increase in the price of beaver could get at its roots. When the associates informed Pontchartrain that these measures were beyond their strength⁶¹ the problem of contraband remained as acute as ever. In a final effort to check this traffic, Pontchartrain resolved upon a desperate measure. Since 1702, he had consistently supported the policy of sparing the New York frontier in order to maintain the Iroquois at peace. Now, in order to sever commercial relations with Albany, he reversed his position and urged Vaudreuil and Raudot to encourage the Indians to wage war on New York.⁶²

Neither the governor nor the intendant were inclined to follow

59. Arrest du conseil d'etat du Roy qui défend aux habitants du Canada d'envoyer directement ou indirectement des castors aux habitations angloises, 25 juin 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 27, p. 72.

60. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 18 mai 1707, AC, B, vol. 29, p. 5; le ministre aux commissionnaires de la colonie de Canada, 3 juin 1708, AC, B, vol. 29, p. 327. Vaudreuil and Raudot thought these guards might annoy the inhabitants.

61. Le ministre à J. et A.D. Raudot, 6 juin 1708, AC, B, vol. 29, p. 318v.

62. Ibid., p. 318; le ministre à Vaudreuil, 6 juin 1708, Ibid., pp. 303 - 303v.

such orders. Despite the dangers attaching to contraband this trade had practically been integrated into the foundations of the Canadian economy. It was almost the only way for the merchants to obtain an adequate price for their beaver and the trade goods necessary to continue in business. To rely uniquely on the French outlets would have entailed more than their personal ruin. It would also have meant refusing large quantities of pelts from the Indian allies and giving them next to nothing for those that were accepted. Such an intolerable situation would have soon dissolved the already weakened Western alliance and left the colony completely isolated. Vaudreuil and the Raudots undoubtedly realized that Canada's survival hinged on contraband. Yet, they could not very well tell Pontchartrain that it was necessary to let this illicit trade continue. The truce with New York would have to be defended on the basis of Iroquois neutrality alone.

As soon as Pontchartrain's deviation from the policy which had prevailed since the beginning of the war became known, Vaudreuil and the Raudots raised their voices in protest. Only the destruction of Albany would solve the problem of contraband, wrote the two intendants, but to attempt such an enterprise would provoke the Iroquois to war. Moreover, the mission Indians might well refuse to strike at New York rather than deprive themselves of the profits of the trade they carried on with this province.⁶³ Vaudreuil used much the same arguments. By sending war parties against New York, he told Pontchartrain, he would be breaking his pledge to the Iroquois and providing those Indians with a pretext for attacking

63. J. et A.D. Raudot au ministre, 23 octobre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 28, pp. 265 - 266.

New France.⁶⁴ Even before receiving these orders, the governor had rarely missed an opportunity to emphasize the necessity of remaining at peace with New York. Although the truce existing between this province and Canada, was based on a verbal agreement with the Iroquois and not on a formal treaty, he wrote in June 1708, New York could be relied upon not to start a war.⁶⁵ The previous year the sr. Chambly had seen governor Cornbury during a trip to Manhattan. The latter had then deplored Dudley's failure to come to terms with Vaudreuil and assured Chambly that he was too well aware of the advantages of peace to permit or incite the people of his province to wage war on Canada.⁶⁶ After having digested this torrent of arguments in favor of the status quo, Pontchartrain soon abandoned his aggressive designs. The dispatches of 1709 showed that, once again, the minister favoured the preservation of peace.⁶⁷

Until 1708, Vaudreuil's New York policy had met with a large measure of success. During these first five years of his administration, he had carefully refrained from provoking the Five Nations and also made them conscious of the usefulness of his mediation in their quarrels with the Upper Indians. These factors, joined to the pressure bearing down on them from the West, had kept the Iroquois at peace. By tolerating contraband during these years, Vaudreuil had also managed to preserve the Western alliance, save the merchants from bankruptcy, and keep the mission Indians

64. Vaudreuil au ministre, 5 novembre 1708, Ibid., pp. 107v - 108.

65. Vaudreuil au ministre, 28 juin 1708, Ibid., pp. 90 - 91v.

66. Vaudreuil au ministre, 8 novembre 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 27, p. 201.

67. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Raudot, 6 juillet 1709, AC, B, vol. 30, p. 149.

satisfied with the benefits derived from this trade. But while their commercial intercourse with Albany solved an economic problem it also created a political one. Frequent economic contacts between the domiciled Iroquois and the English, joined to the attempts the latter made on such occasions to win them from Canada, tended to weaken French ascendancy over them. It was therefore necessary to devise some policy which might neutralize the harmful effects of this trade and keep the mission Indians firmly in the Canadian alliance. In the Little War on New England Vaudreuil would find the answer to this problem.

CHAPTER V

The Little War on New England

Considerable differences existed between Canada's relations with New England and New York during the War of the Spanish Succession. Upon becoming governor, Vaudreuil had immediately decided that the safety of the colony depended on the neutrality of the Iroquois. Principally for that reason, he had observed a truce with New York. Where New England was concerned, however, Vaudreuil judged that the colony's interests might best be served by war. In adopting such a policy he was not thinking of conquest, an enterprise which would have required resources far in excess of those at his disposal. Nor was he primarily interested in weakening the English settlements. His war policy was rather a desperation measure designed to keep the mission Indians and the Abenakis in the French interest. The domiciled Iroquois, Vaudreuil feared, might grow cool toward the French if nothing was done to counteract the effect of their numerous visits to Albany where they were fully exposed to English influence. As for the Abenakis, since New France could not compete economically with New England, the governor thought war necessary to prevent any possibility of an entente between them and the English.

Much more than the alliance or enmity of an Indian nation was at stake where the Abenakis were concerned. By their geographic location these Indians formed a rampart against New England. Should they ever desert the French, one of the main obstacles to

English expansion toward Acadia and the St. Lawrence River would be lifted. Furthermore, on account of their extensive knowledge of Canada, the Abenakis would be very dangerous to the French should they ever become English allies. But while French motives are clear, one may wonder at the advantages the Abenakis hoped to derive from this war. They lived close to the English and depended on them for their sustenance and every day needs. The war which was about to begin would dislocate their entire economy and oblige two of the four villages to immigrate to Canada in the summer of 1704. The forces which were to prove strong enough to offset these disadvantages were those of tradition and religion. While the French looked upon the Abenakis as an obstacle to English expansion, the Abenakis, in the course of the seventeenth century, had come to consider the French as allies against English encroachments on their lands. Furthermore, these Indians were closely tied to the French by Catholicism and predisposed as a result to consider Canadian interests as their own.¹

Some six months before his death, Callières, in view of the recurrence of war, had authorized the Abenakis to strike at New England. But the Indians were wavering and Dudley was doing what he could to neutralize the influence of the French among them. In December 1702, he reported that the Eastern Indians, as far as the Pebnoscot River, were in good order. Yet he was pessimistic, "the French Jesuits being among them at all times whose influence must needs prevail to run them into mischief with the first of

1. "L'Abénaki a de tout temps regardé le François comme le seul avec lequel nous devons avoir le même sort," a group of these Indians told Vaudreuil in 1706. Paroles des Abénakis à M. le marquis de Vaudreuil, 14 septembre 1706, Coll. Mss. N. F., vol. 2, p. 456.

the spring."² By July of 1703, as a result of further conferences with the Indians, he had regained some measure of confidence. He now informed the Council of Massachusetts that, notwithstanding the efforts of the Jesuits to provoke them to war,³ the Abenakis wished to remain at peace.

Vaudreuil was keeping a close watch on developments along the New England border. The information he received from Father Sébastien Rasle, missionary at the village of Norridgewok on the Kennebec River in the early summer of 1703, belied Dudley's report on the disposition of the savages. The Abenakis, Rasle told Vaudreuil, were standing by and would strike at the English when so ordered.⁴ The governor now began preparations for an immediate attack on New England. "Il estoit de toute nécessité de brouiller les cartes de ce costé là," he explained. "Autrement l'Abénaki qui chanceloit auroit pu s'accomoder avec l'Anglois et par les suites nous estre contraire."⁵ A war party, consisting of a nucleus of soldiers and Canadians to which were joined detachments of Abenakis and domiciled Iroquois, was soon organized. Led by Beaubassin, it ravaged the Maine border for a distance of some fifty miles and, by French estimates, killed or carried off three hundred men, women and children.⁶ New England had no choice but to gird for defense. War was declared on the Abenakis, one

2. Dudley to the Earl of Nottingham, December 10, 1702, CSPA 1702 - 1703, p. 34.

3. Minutes of the Council of Massachusetts Bay, July 8, 1703, Ibid., p. 542.

4. Vaudreuil et Beauharnois au ministre, 15 novembre 1703, AC, C 11 A, vol. 21, p. 13.

5. Vaudreuil au ministre, 14 novembre 1703, Ibid., p. 51v.

6. Vaudreuil et Beauharnois au ministre, 15 novembre 1703, Ibid., pp. 13 - 13v.

thousand men were placed under arms and the Assembly, which had stood prorogued until October, was summoned to an extraordinary sitting to vote the needed funds.⁷

Hardly had this party returned to Canada when the Abenakis asked Vaudreuil to help them avenge some of their warriors who had been killed by the English. The governor obliged by placing fifty Frenchmen and two hundred Indians, domiciled Iroquois and Abenakis, under the command of Hertel de Rouville. At the height of winter this party fell with savage fury upon the small village of Deerfield on the Upper Connecticut River. The watch being neglected, the Indians got by the gates and fired several houses before the alarm was given. A battle of sorts followed but it was not until the arrival of reinforcements that Rouville and his men were obliged to withdraw.⁸

Councils at Versailles were divided over these expeditions. Champigny, the former intendant, who was assisting Pontchartrain by commenting on the Canadian dispatches, was strongly opposed to Vaudreuil's policy. The English colonies, he stated, desired only peace and the French were responsible for having started all the wars in North America. He also feared that as a result of these attacks the English would attempt to drive the Iroquois to war with New France.⁹ No one in Canada, oddly enough not even Vaudreuil, seems to have understood the possibility of New York and the

7. Minutes of the Council of Massachusetts Bay, September 1, 1703, CSPA 1702 - 1703, p. 664.

8. Dudley to the Council of Trade and Plantations, April 20, 1704, CSPA 1704 - 1705, pp. 99 - 100.

9. Vaudreuil et Beauharnois au ministre, [abst.] 15 novembre 1703, AC, C 11 A, vol. 21, pp. 29 - 30.

Iroquois being forced to take up arms as a result of the raids on New England. On one occasion, for instance, Vaudreuil wrote that to satisfy the Iroquois he was refraining from any provocation along the New York frontier, "mais je n'ay point voulu y com-
orendre le gouvernement de Baston parce que n'estant pas à portée des Iroquois comme les autres et ne pouvant pas nous faire grand tort pour ce qui regarde cette colonie j'ay esté bien aise de ménager mes conditions".¹⁰ The possibility of intercolonial cooperation appears to have escaped him.

Final word on the matter rested with Pontchartrain. The minister at this time favored war only if it was certain to lead to the destruction of the English colonies with no increase in expenses. If these conditions, which he himself must have known to be impossible, could not be satisfied, neutrality was preferable. The King's honor, however, forbade that Vaudreuil take the initiative in seeking it. On the recommendation of Champigny he told the governor to instruct the missionaries to tell the Indians to ask the English to take the first step.¹¹ In the meantime he approved of Vaudreuil's policy of fomenting war between the Abenakis and New England in order to prevent an alliance between them.¹² How these tortuous instructions would have affected the course of the war had they reached the governor on schedule is not known. The storeship la Seine which was taking them to Canada was captured by the English and copies

10. Vaudreuil au ministre, 19 octobre 1705, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, p. 241.

11. Mémoire du Roi à Vaudreuil et Beauharnois, 14 juin 1704, AC, B, vol. 25, pp. 113 - 114v.

12. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 14 juin 1704, AC, B, vol. 25, p. 99v.

of these dispatches did not reach Vaudreuil until 1705.

In the spring of 1704 the Indians, who seemed to be taking a liking to these incursions against New England, asked to be permitted to resume their attacks. Vaudreuil now decided to unite them to 120 Frenchmen and form a single war party of 800 men under the command of Beaucours. Because of the preparations required to fit out an expedition this size the affair soon became an open secret. Some Mohawks who were returning from a visit to Canada advised Peter Schuyler, the mayor of Albany, of what was going on and the latter lost no time in passing the information on to Dudley. As things turned out the project had to be abandoned. With the war party still some distance from the English settlements a soldier deserted and, as a result, the Indians panicked.¹³ Nonetheless New England had been obliged to mobilize its resources in money and manpower to resist the attack. 1,900 men were under arms, 600 of them aboard twenty sloops. The latter under Colonel Church proceeded to ravage the coast of Acadia and even made an unauthorized and feeble attack against Port Royal.¹⁴ The Massachusetts assembly had sat during the entire month of June and voted £ 23,000 for the defense of the embattled province.¹⁵ Since 1702 Dudley estimated that the assembly had given £ 50,000 to support the war, "which would all be saved for the future by one sound

13. Vaudreuil et Beauharnois au ministre, 17 novembre 1704, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, pp. 15 - 16.

14. E. Kimball, The Public Life of Joseph Dudley, 111

15. Dudley to the Council of Trade and Plantations, July 13, 1704, CSPA 1704 - 1705, pp. 214 - 215.

stroke against the French."¹⁶ To make this sound stroke possible, Dudley pleaded for help from both England¹⁷ and, as Champigny had feared, from New York and the Iroquois.¹⁸ The Albany commissioners, however, refused to be moved while the European situation left England with little to spare for her colonies. For the moment, Massachusetts was left to fare as best it could on its own resources, but because of the enormous effort of the past two years it urgently required a respite. Since Dudley had failed in his attempt to control the Indians independently he now had to manoeuvre the French into granting some sort of truce. It was for this purpose that he now opened negotiations with Vaudreuil. They lasted from January 1705 to March 1706 and during this time Dudley succeeded in his basic aim of restoring peace on his frontiers.

In their early stages the negotiations revolved around a general exchange of prisoners, with the two governors first exchanging an acrimonious correspondence on the subject. Dudley, perhaps in the hope of frightening Vaudreuil, threatened dire consequences if the French persisted in their barbarous warfare. Vaudreuil, who was not the type to be so easily impressed, promptly accused the New Englanders of having committed heinous crimes against the French, particularly in Acadia where Church had murdered some prisoners after having granted quarter.¹⁹ The French governor

16. Dudley to [Secretary Hedges], November 26, 1704, CSPA 1704 - 1705, pp. 324 - 325.

17. Loc. cit.

18. "The governor of New York in 1704 refused to support our commissioners in their endeavour to move the Five Nations to take up arms against the French" A Complaint as to the neutrality of the Five Nations and a proposal for taking Port Royal, May 31, 1708, CSPA 1706 - 1708, p. 739.

19. Dudley à Vaudreuil, 10 avril 1704, Coll. Mss. N. F., vol. 2, pp. 410 - 411; Dudley à Vaudreuil, 21 août 1704, Ibid., pp. 425 - 426; Dudley à Vaudreuil, 20 décembre 1704, Ibid., pp. 426 - 427; Vaudreuil à Dudley, 26 mars 1705, Ibid., pp. 428 - 431.

however, was prepared to accept the exchange and he sent Courtemanche to Boston to make his conditions known. All the French prisoners detained in New England would have to be released and he specified that this should include an individual named Baptiste who had been captured before the outbreak of war for what amounted to piracy against the English.²⁰ The New England colonists, and the Boston merchants especially, were opposed to his release but the General Court advised Dudley to comply if the exchange could not be effected in any other way.²¹

Now that both sides were agreed, the exchange could have been carried out without further delay and the matter closed. But it was in Dudley's interest to prolong these negotiations and the loophole which might enable him to do so was ready at hand. By his commission Courtemanche was authorized to negotiate only for those prisoners in the hands of the French and not for those, still detained by the Indians, whose number was estimated at 72.²² Dudley now drew up a treaty calling for the inclusion of these prisoners in the exchange and Courtemanche took these conditions back to Vaudreuil for approval. Accompanied by William Dudley, the governor's eighteen year old son, and Samuel Vetch, a prominent merchant, Courtemanche returned to Quebec by sea, aboard a New England brig, alleging that an illness from which he was just recovering prevented him from using the more tiresome overland route. The group arrived

20. Instructions au sr. de Courtemanche, s.d., Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 432 - 433.

21. E. Kimball, op. cit., p. 112.

22. Traité fait et conclu... pour la restauration des prisonniers Juillet 1705, AC, F 3, vol 8, pp. 380 - 383; Order of Queen in Council, February 20, 1707, CSPA 1706 - 1708, p. 379.

in Canada in early August 1705. The conduct of the English delegates during their stay of three months in the colony soon gave rise to gossip and angry comments from which Vaudreuil himself did not entirely escape.

During the brief period of peace which had followed the treaty of Ryswick, Vetch had traded with Canada on a fairly extensive scale and when war broke out in 1702 £ 800 were still due to him by various Canadians on unpaid bills of exchange. When the question arose of sending someone to Canada with Courtemanche Vetch came forward and his fluency in French made him acceptable to the governor and council. Furthermore he offered to accept this employment without remuneration upon condition that he be permitted to bring back the value of his debt in beaver.²³ The New England authorities readily gave their consent, but as a result Vetch's activities during his stay at Quebec were hardly of a nature to enhance the character of the negotiations which were supposed to be the main purpose of his visit. Like most New Englanders he was well informed of the scarcity of goods in Canada, which had become critical since the capture of la Seine, and he decided to profit from the situation by loading the brig with merchandise which he sold upon arriving in the colony.²⁴ He was also surprised while in the process of loading ten barrels aboard his craft which lay at anchor before Quebec. Upon being examined they were found to be crammed with

23. Order of Queen in Council, February 20, 1707, Ibid., pp. 379 - 381.

24. Vaudreuil et Beauharnois au ministre, 19 octobre 1705, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, pp. 195 - 196; Mémoire du Roi à Vaudreuil et aux Raudot, 9 juin 1706, AC, B, vol. 27, p. 214v; Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 9 juin 1706, AC, B, vol. 27, p. 227v.

beaver pelts.²⁵ Vetch's behavior provided Vaudreuil's enemies with an opportunity to cast aspersions upon both the governor and the negotiations. The latter, asserted la Mothe-Cadillac, were but a pretext to enable Dudley and Vaudreuil to carry on a private trade and this private trade was also the reason why the exchange of prisoners was being delayed.²⁶

While Vetch's illicit commerce was one cause of complaint the activities of young Dudley's entourage was another. Vaudreuil, as was his habit, had graciously received the New Englanders and, somewhat negligently, allowed them every liberty during their stay in the colony. The historian Charlevoix who was returning to Quebec at this time overheard some officers complain that the Englishmen, who were allowed to visit the city unattended, had examined and sketched the fortifications. As for the brig, it was said to have gathered valuable information on the navigation of the St. Lawrence. Charlevoix in fact expressed surprise that Vaudreuil had not yet realized what was obvious to everyone else, namely that New England was only playing for time.²⁷ From the governor's point of view, however, the situation was not as simple as all that.

One of the reasons why the delegation remained in Canada three months was that Vaudreuil wanted to prevent information from reaching Boston on the presence of French ships in the St. Lawrence. More important, however, was the fact that soon after his arrival

25. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 9 juin 1706, AC, B, vol. 27, p. 227v.

26. la Mothe-Cadillac au ministre, [abst.] 28 oct. 1705, AC, C 11 A, vol. 23, p. 163v; see also Ramezay au ministre, 12 oct. 1705, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, pp. 336v - 337.

27. Charlevoix, Histoire de la Nouvelle-France, vol. 2, pp. 301 - 302.

Vetch had indicated that he was interested in negotiating a full-fledged treaty of neutrality between the two colonies. Before negotiating on this new basis Vaudreuil had to await instructions from the court and it was not until early October that the dispatches arrived. They revealed that Pontchartrain was now unequivocal in his desire for peace. The minister, as already explained, wanted war only if it could lead to the destruction of the English colonies with no increase in expenses. The Beaucours fiasco, however, was enough to convince him of the difficulties and expenses involved in a colonial conflict and Vaudreuil was told to refrain from organizing such large scale expeditions in the future. Furthermore, if he saw a possibility of establishing a firm neutrality between New York, Massachusetts and Canada he was authorized to negotiate for it.²⁸

These metropolitan reasons for peace in America were bolstered by colonial ones. The credit of the Company of the Colony had recently been limited to 150,000 livres, greasy beaver had been banned and the cost of merchandise was increasing. To the Indian allies these changes meant but one thing: that the French alliance was becoming daily less profitable. Claude de Ramezay may simply have echoed the thoughts of the colonial administration on this issue when he stated that in such circumstances it would prove extremely difficult to hold the Indians in their present warlike dispositions.²⁹ Should the Indians relent, Canada would find itself in the unenviable position of being abandoned by its allies

28. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Beauharnois, 17 juin 1705, AC, B, vol. 27, p. 66v; le ministre à Vaudreuil, 17 juin 1705, Ibid., p. 73.

29. Ramezay au ministre, 12 octobre 1705, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, p. 337v.

while at war with the English. Under such conditions, it was important to make an attempt at neutrality. On October 8, Vaudreuil advised Vetch that he was prepared to listen to his propositions.

The establishment of neutrality was the basic purpose of the draft treaty which Vetch now produced, but other clauses, designed to further the interests of the fisheries and commerce of New England, reflected the influence of the mercantile class of Massachusetts. The treaty provided that subjects of one colony who, for private or business reasons, had to travel to the other, would be protected by passports. Similar protection, valid for forty days, would be issued to ships navigating in Labrador and Cape Breton Island waters and even in the gulf and the St. Lawrence river. As can be seen, Massachusetts was making an effort to widen its zone of operations by prying open the territorial waters of French North America. Had Vaudreuil accepted the treaty as it stood there can be but little doubt that war would have ceased at once, for New England would thereby have gained the substance of an objective which otherwise had to wait till the treaty of Utrecht for fulfillment: the expansion and security of its fisheries.³⁰

Vaudreuil however had to bear in mind the dictates of French mercantilism and the necessity of affording protection to as much of French North America as possible. In reply he stated that this neutrality would have to apply to Acadia and Cape Breton Island as well as to Canada. Furthermore not only Dudley but all the English governors who were in a position to attack Canada would have

30. Projet des articles de trêve à conclure entre les gouverneurs de la Nouvelle France et de la Nouvelle Angleterre en Amérique, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, pp. 286 - 288v.

to subscribe to the treaty. As for the privileges of reciprocal commerce they were absolutely ruled out. Passports would not convey the right to carry merchandise between the two colonies and furthermore they could not be issued to fishing boats but only to ships engaged on official government business. The ominous deadline for Dudley's acceptance was set at March 1, 1706.³¹ "Je suis persuadé," wrote Vaudreuil, "que s'ils acceptent ce parti nous en retirerons plus d'avantage qu'eux, quand ce seroit que nos costes de l'Acadie que je mettray à couvert par ce traité."³²

In its modified form, however, the treaty was no longer acceptable to New England and it seems to have been rejected outright. Before the truce period expired, Dudley sent another deputy to Vaudreuil, perhaps in the hope of gaining an extension, but the French governor was now sure that his protagonist was simply playing for time and he allowed the Indians to resume their attacks. This tactic, he thought, would exasperate the New Englanders and oblige Dudley to come to terms with him.³³ But another, and perhaps more fundamental reason for the resumption of war, was the disaffected condition of the Indians.³⁴ By now, even Dudley was aware of their

31. Projet du traité à faire entre les deux colonies de la Nouvelle France et de la Nouvelle Angleterre suivant les propositions que le sr. Veche [sic] a fait à M. de Vaudreuil de la part de M. Dudley gouverneur de la Nouvelle Angleterre, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, pp. 283 - 285v.

32. Vaudreuil au ministre, 19 octobre 1705, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, p. 248.

33. Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 24, p. 4v.

34. Speaking of these raids, Vaudreuil and Raudot stated: "Nous ne doutons point... que cela ne fasse un bon effet par rapport aux Anglois en les pressant de conclure et encores un meilleur pour nos sauvages qui estans tous nuds par rapport à la cherté des marchandises et le bas prix du castor trouvent à s'habiller chez les Anglois sans qu'il leur en coute rien." Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 30 avril 1706, AC, C 11 A, vol. 24, p. 9v.

"starving and discontented condition"³⁵ as the beaver crisis continued with no relief in sight. To afford them some relief, Vaudreuil had been obliged to allow the Abenakis of St. François and Bécancour to follow the domiciled Iroquois to Albany, where they were fully exposed to English influence.³⁶ Subercase, the governor of Acadia, advised Pontchartrain that the Indians of his jurisdiction, the Canibas, Malecites and Mic Macs, were taking their trade to New York.³⁷ In order to counterbalance^u English attempts to wean the Indians from the French alliance Vaudreuil fell back upon his old tactic of encouraging raids against New England by waving the hope of booty before the Indians. Indeed, accusations that the governor was encouraging these attacks by buying English scalps now began to increase.³⁸

For all practical purposes, resumption of this little war put an end to neutrality negotiations between Canada and New England. Although Pontchartrain kept on sending instruction on the matter until 1708 Dudley had been advised not to proceed as early as August 1706.³⁹ The only result achieved by the conferences and

35. Dudley to the Council of Trade and Plantations, February 1, 1706, CSPA 1706 - 1708, p. 31.

36. Paroles des Abénakis à Vaudreuil, 14 septembre 1706, Coll. Mss. N. F., vol. 2, pp. 456 - 457.

37. Le ministre à Subercase, 30 juin 1707, AC, B, vol. 29, p. 181; le ministre à Subercase, 24 août 1707, Ibid., p. 219; le ministre à Riverin, 16 mai 1708, Ibid., p. 296v.

38. Dudley may have given the basic reason for these raids when he stated that "the Indians had a better trade of taking prisoners than of hunting for beaver." Dudley to the Council of Trade and Plantations, February 1, 1706, CSPA 1706 - 1708; p. 31.

39. Secretary Hedges to Dudley, August 1, 1706, CSPA 1706 - 1708, p. 187.

embassies was an exchange of prisoners which took place during 1706. Vaudreuil, whose fingers had been burned once at this game, took extraordinary precautions when another New England ship arrived in Canada to take the English prisoners back to Boston. It was inspected for contraband and a guard remained on board for the time it lay at anchor before Quebec. He also advised Dudley that since the negotiations had failed, the reason for sending ships to New France no longer existed and he was to refrain from doing so in the future.⁴⁰

The raids on New England were resumed in May, 1706, when three hundred Indians attacked simultaneously along a two hundred mile front. As a measure of defense, Dudley had distributed 1,500 militia among the most exposed villages. But he was no longer satisfied with remaining solely on the defensive. While Canada's Indian allies kept his frontier in turmoil, privateers operating out of Port Royal were a constant menace to his shipping. Early in 1707, Massachusetts decided to strike a blow at Port Royal, the town referred to in English colonial circles as the Dunkerque of America. The expedition which followed was purely a Massachusetts effort and sadly reflected lack of preparation and adequate leadership.⁴¹ The force of 1,100 men landed in the vicinity of Port Royal on June 6. After being delayed for over a week by skirmishes with partisans, the invaders managed to approach the fort. But before they could get the siege properly underway the heavy fire of the French cannon forced them to retreat. After withdrawing to Canso

40. Vaudreuil au ministre, [abst.] 28 avril, 30 octobre, 1 et 4 novembre 1706, AC, C 11 A, vol. 24, pp. 113v - 114v.

41. E. Kimball, op. cit., p. 121.

the English held a council of war and sent deputies to Dudley for instructions.⁴² Disappointed with their failure, the governor ordered them to attack again. This second attempt took place in early August and once more the New Englanders were out-manoeuvered by Subercase and his capable first lieutenant, the half-breed St. Castin. The invaders were continually harried by guerillas. Then, as they prepared to storm the fort, they suffered heavy losses at the hands of St. Castin and his men who had been lying in ambush.⁴³ The English promptly retreated and, after destroying some property, returned to Boston. Acadia remained French but the attack boded ill for the future of Acadia and Canada.

Pontchartrain had received intelligence in June that an expedition was fitting out in Boston, presumably to attack Canada. This information he passed on to Vaudreuil, although the minister saw little likelihood of Canada being the objective. At the same time he expressed strong hopes that the raids which were being carried out on New England would prevent the expedition from getting underway.⁴⁴ What is hinted at in this dispatch becomes clear in the next one. Vaudreuil was given positive orders to attack New England, if possible to lead the expeditions himself, in order to tie up all the resources of this province in defense.⁴⁵ Vaudreuil, who was himself preoccupied with defensive preparations

42. Subercase au ministre, 26 juin 1707, AC, C 11 D, vol. 6, pp. 19 - 33.

43. Subercase au ministre, 20 et 25 décembre 1707, Ibid., pp. 72 - 76v.

44. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 13 juillet 1707, AC, B, vol. 29, p. 125.

45. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 24 août 1707, Ibid., p. 171.

at this time as a result of warnings received of a fleet fitting out in Boston, was unable to carry out these orders.⁴⁶ Pontchartrain therefore repeated them in 1708. " [Sa Majesté], " wrote the minister sharply, " n'est pas contente de l'inaction dans laquelle vous restez ... d'autant plus que cela facilite aux gens de ce gouvernement [Massachusetts] les moyens d'entreprendre sur l'Acadie. Elle veut absolument que vous envoyiez souvent des partis de leur côté."⁴⁷

While Pontchartrain was ordering intensified attacks on New England, the New York authorities were increasing their attempts to neutralize the mission Indians and thus eliminate the threat to peace which their incursions on New England constituted. This policy had been practiced by Albany since the beginning of the war. In 1704, for example, when Peter Schuyler was returning from the abortive meeting at Onondaga,⁴⁸ he had met six Caughnawaga Indians who were visiting with their kinsmen, the Mohawks. According to Indian custom he gave them a wampum belt for their village whereby they were asked to desist from their attacks on New England. Ramezay was able to retrieve this belt and Vaudreuil had it sent back to Schuyler as a sign of the contempt with which the Indians had regarded his demand.⁴⁹ In 1705, a group of Caughnawaga Indians

46. Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 16 juillet 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 25, pp. 4v - 5v; Vaudreuil au ministre, 24 juillet 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 26, pp. 59v - 60.

47. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 6 juin 1708, AC, B, vol. 29, pp. 303 - 303v.

48. See above, p. 76.

49. Vaudreuil et Beauharnois au ministre, 17 novembre 1704, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, pp. 17 - 17v.

who were visiting Albany had been invited to settle among the Mohawks.⁵⁰ The Mohawks themselves were frequent visitors to Canada and on such occasions usually attempted to further English interests. In 1704 they had provided Schuyler with advance information on the Beaucours expedition.⁵¹ Within the bounds of their neutrality with the French, which not even the plight of New England could induce them to break, the New Yorkers were doing what they could to soften the blows aimed at the sister colony.

The reason why this policy was intensified in 1708 is not difficult to ascertain. Since the resumption of the little war in 1706, and more especially since the failure of the attack on Port Royal, the cry for help from Massachusetts was growing louder. By the fall of 1707 it was a steady clamor. In November of that year, Dudley suggested a general attack against Canada.⁵² In May, 1708, the Massachusetts Assembly addressed to the Board of Trade a strongly worded Complaint against the Neutrality of the Five Nations⁵³ Finally, in July, came the most famous report of all: Samuel Vetch's Canada Surveyed ...,⁵⁴ which, by a forceful explanation of the advantages to be derived from a conquest of New France, turned England's attention to America. New York realized that a general war had become almost inevitable. Not only were

50. Wraxall, p. 44.

51. Réponse de Vaudreuil envoyée à Ramezay pour dire de sa part aux Aniers, 29 septembre 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 26, p. 84.

52. Dudley to the Council of Trade and Plantations, November 10, 1707, CSPA 1706 - 1708, p. 590.

53. In Ibid., p. 739.

54. For the report see CSPA 1706 - 1708, p. 41 passim. Its importance is analyzed in G.M. Waller, Samuel Vetch, Colonial Enterpriser, pp. 94 - 120.

the inhabitants of this colony militarily unprepared for such a development but it might also sever their profitable trade relations with Canada. Their efforts to disarm the mission Indians must primarily be regarded as an attempt to calm Massachusetts and only secondly as one to weaken Canada. In fact, if the information volunteered by a New England prisoner can be believed, Peter Schuyler's personal intervention had prevented five hundred exasperated Bostonians from attacking Canada early in 1708. At that time Schuyler had allegedly told Dudley that he was finally the master of the mission Indians and that Massachusetts no longer had anything to fear from New France.⁵⁵

Whether or not Vaudreuil perceived the essential nature of New York's intervention, his reaction to it was the same. From his point of view the policy of New York was a threat to French ascendancy over the Indian auxiliaries. If nothing was done to counterbalance their economic ties with the English, they might desert the French cause entirely. With the beaver trade still depressed the governor once again incited them to war.

The last major expedition sent against New England left Montreal on July 26, 1708, under the command of St. Ours Deschailions and Hertel de Rouville. The fact that the party almost turned back was proof enough of the growing success of Schuyler's tactics. Indeed, it was principally to put an end to Albany intrigue with the Indians that Vaudreuil organized this war party.⁵⁶ By 1708 the Iroquois

55. Vaudreuil au ministre, 12 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 28, pp. 150v - 151.

56. "Ce party a paru extrêmement nécessaire... pour rompre toutes les intrigues que les Anglois d'Orange faisoient avec nos sauvages." Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, Ibid., pp. 38 - 38v.

were participating in the raids on New England with growing reluctance. In January, a Caughnawaga chief named Stiatague, who had just received a wampum belt from the Mohawks,⁵⁷ informed Ramezay that he was ordering his warriors to desist.⁵⁸ Vaudreuil purposely affected great indifference for the balance of the winter, but in the spring he came to Montreal, assembled the Indians, and told them that their passivity would finally cause their ruin. He pointed out that, for want of occupation, their young warriors were joining up with the Mohawks to assist them in their war against the Flat Heads, a tribe settled in the region of North Carolina. Then, instead of returning to their village, they remained among the Five Nations. The village elders thanked the governor for his good words and promised to lift the prohibition against the New England war.⁵⁹ But at the same time, five chiefs from the same village were visiting Albany where they promised to bury the hatchet in return for cheap goods and a good price for their beaver.⁶⁰

The expedition got underway in two detachments. Deschaillons and Rouville commanded the main body, made up of 100 Frenchmen and 60 Abenakis and Nippissingues. The second group consisted of 220 Iroquois, from the missions of Sault St.Louis, Sault au Récollet and la Montagne, under the command of la Périère. The understanding was that they would rendez-vous at a lake situated some distance inside the New England border. A few days after their departure,

57. Vaudreuil au ministre, 5 novembre 1708, Ibid., p. 111v.

58. Parolles du nommé Stiatague ... qui parle pour tout le village, 31 janvier 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, pp. 16 - 16v.

59. Vaudreuil au ministre, 5 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 28, pp. 109v - 112.

60. Wraxall, p. 53.

however, Vaudreuil received word from la Périère that some of his Indians had come down with disease and, as a result, all were turning back. The governor suspected that disease was but a pretext and the hope of wrecking the expedition the real motive of their action.⁶¹ He therefore sent a runner after Deschailions and Rouville to tell them that even if they should be abandoned by their Indians it was essential that they continue and attack alone rather than retreat without striking a blow. The Abenakis and Nipissingues, however, being joined to a large body of Frenchmen, were easier to control than 220 Iroquois under a single officier. They kept with the French, and, half an hour before dawn on a morning in late August, the group swooped down on Haverhill.⁶²

Dudley had been informed by Indian spies that a large war party was setting out from Montreal, but not knowing where they would strike he was obliged to raise and equip 2,000 men and distribute them, 150 to a village, from Deerfield to Wells, a distance of 200 miles.⁶³ As a result, when the French and Indians attacked Haverhill, they encountered unexpectedly strong resistance in the form of 100 militia and a troop of cavalry. To subdue the defenders the French set the village on fire. As they fled from the scene they ran headlong into reinforcements hurrying from the nearest settlement. In the fighting that followed five Frenchmen, including Verchères

61. "Pratiqués par les Anglois ou pour vouloir couvrir notre nation de honte en faisant relacher le parti les Iroquois sont revenus à leurs cabanes si bien que le sr. de la Périère a été obligé de relacher." Vaudreuil au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 28, p. 39.

62. Vaudreuil au ministre, 5 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 28, pp. 112 - 116.

63. Dudley to the Council of Trade and Plantations, March 1, 1709, CSPA 1708 - 1709, p. 240.

and Chambly, and three Indians were killed while eighteen others were wounded. As for the English Vaudreuil triumphantly claimed that one hundred had died in the encounter.⁶⁴ Dudley's figures of course disagreed with those given by the French governor⁶⁵ but, in any event, the exact outcome of the battle was of secondary importance. What mattered was that the French had attacked and had not been defeated despite the boycott of the mission Iroquois. This made a great impression on their minds and provided them with the needed incentive to renew their raids. Eighty-two of them joined up with 150 Abenakis and, in small parties, they resumed their attacks on isolated settlements.

Vaudreuil assured Pontchartrain that he would continue to harass New England in this manner but he seemed to fear that the minister might ask for something more. Indeed, at this time, Claude de Ramezay was suggesting the formation of a large party of some 900 men "pour rétablir l'autorité parmi les sauvages"⁶⁶ and offering to lead it himself. There was no love lost between the governor of Montreal and Vaudreuil and the latter strongly criticized this suggestion. If such an expedition became possible, Vaudreuil told the minister, he would organize it and, in that case, lead it personally. But expeditions to New England required three months and it would be dangerous to drain the colony of the cream of its fighting force for such an extended period. Furthermore the cost

64. Vaudreuil au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 28, pp. 39v - 41.

65. Dudley claimed that the English had lost three families while 20 of the attackers had been killed. Dudley to the Council of Trade and Plantations, March 1, 1709, CSPA 1708 - 1709, p. 240.

66. Ramezay au ministre, [abst.] 14 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, p. 232.

would be high and, on account of the hardships involved, many inhabitants would not or could not volunteer.⁶⁷ By energetically prosecuting the Little War, Vaudreuil was compromising between an all out attack and a purely defensive policy.

In 1708, the first phase of the War of the Spanish Succession in North America came to an end. During this period, an isolated New England had been left to defend itself as best it could against the repeated inroads of French and Indian war parties. New York, protected from attack by the truce between the French and the Iroquois, had refused to intervene. In 1709, however, Great Britain would respond to the appeal of New England and oblige New York to participate in the effort to conquer Canada. Vaudreuil's New England policy was largely responsible for this development. Had the inhabitants of this colony been left in peace as those of New York it seems unlikely that they would have thought of conquest. Such a policy made them depend all the more closely on England and threatened to undermine still further the independence of their Commonwealth which had already been dealt a hard blow by the issue of the second Massachusetts Charter. "Je ne les crois pas assez aveugles pour ne point percevoir qu'insensiblement ils vont subir le joug du parlement de la vieille Angleterre," Philippe de Pastour de Costebelle, governor of Newfoundland, shrewdly observed in 1710. "Mais par les cruautés que les Canadiens et sauvages exercent sur leurs terres ... je juge qu'ils aiment encore mieux se délivrer de l'inhumanité de semblables voisins que de conserver toute l'ancienne autorité de leur ancienne république."⁶⁸ It might be argued that

67. Vaudreuil au ministre, 5 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 28, pp. 131 - 132v.

68. Costebelle au ministre, 3 décembre 1710, AC, C 11 C, vol. 7, p. 47v.

Vaudreuil, having to choose between losing the Indians or keeping them in the French interest at the risk of provoking New England to war, came out in favour of the second alternative. Yet there is no indication in his correspondence that the problem of a New England policy ever presented itself to him in this form. Unlike Costebelle, he appears to have largely ignored the political condition of Massachusetts. Unlike Champigny, he failed to see the possibility of intercolonial cooperation. As a result he does not appear to have understood that incessant Indian raids might exasperate the New Englanders into attempting to conquer Canada. Had Vaudreuil been alive to this possibility it seems logical to believe that he would have searched for ways other than the Little War to keep the mission Indians and Abenakis from deserting the French.

CHAPTER VI

Years of Crisis

In 1709, the war of the Spanish Succession entered a new and critical phase for French North America. Vaudreuil, who had held the initiative on both the New York and the New England frontier up to that time, was thrown back on the defensive while Massachusetts, in cooperation with England, made a supreme effort to conquer Canada. New York, although unwilling, was forced to take up arms and this change in policy presented the Iroquois with an opportunity to break their neutrality with the French. Despite this menace of a two-pronged attack to which Canada was exposed, France, hard pressed on the continent, could do little for her colony. Responsibility for planning and implementing a defensive policy now rested almost exclusively with Vaudreuil whose powers during those years were practically those of an autonomous ruler. Pontchartrain, who had issued general directives until 1708, acted as little more than a rubber stamp during this period.

Rumors that New York was preparing to attack Canada had begun filtering into the colony in the late fall of 1708. As a precautionary measure Vaudreuil ordered Ramezay to be on the alert and he asked the younger Raudot to stock provisions, snowshoes and sleds in Montreal in case it should prove necessary to march after winter had set in. By December 29, Ramezay having informed Vaudreuil that news of an attack was still coming in, the governor came up to Montreal himself, taking all the officers and the best

soldiers with him. Soon after arriving in the city on January 19 the governor realized that fears of an attack were unfounded but in order to calm the inhabitants, who seemed to be apprehending a third Iroquois war, he remained in Montreal until February.¹

Although no danger of invasion existed that early in the year, the reports which Ramezay had received from the Indians and passed on to Vaudreuil were more than idle rumours. By the fall of 1708 plans had been drawn up in England for land and sea operations to take place against Canada the following year. These plans called for one thousand men from Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New Hampshire to meet the English fleet at Piscataqua at the end of April and then proceed to lay siege to Quebec. Simultaneously, regular troops, militia and the Five Nations would attack Montreal by way of the Richelieu.² In an effort to stir up the people of New York, among whom the prospect of war had not produced much enthusiasm, the pacific Cornbury was replaced by Lord Lovelace as governor of that province. According to one report New York's agrarian element favored the war but the merchant community was strongly opposed to it.³ By 1711 it was being said that the country seemed "generally averse" to a rupture with the French.⁴ As for Peter Schuyler, who had been designated to rally the Five

1. Vaudreuil au ministre, 27 avril 1709, AC, C 11 A, vol. 30, pp. 24 - 27v.

2. An explanatory Supplement to Capt Vetch's proposal for an attack upon Quebec and Montreal, November 17, 1708, CSPA 1708 - 1709, pp. 147 - 150; Instructions to Lord Lovelace, April 28, 1709, Ibid., p. 284.

3. Thomas Cockerill to Popple, July 2, 1709, Ibid., p. 409.

4. George Clarke to the Council of Trade and Plantations, May 28, 1711, CSPA 1710 - 1711, p. 527.

Nations to the English cause, he again offered his mediation to Vaudreuil in the war the latter was carrying on against New England.⁵

Vaudreuil suspected that the appointment of the new governor was related in some way to invasion projects and he accordingly pressed his defensive preparations. Ramezay inspected the stockades in the vicinity of Montreal and small Indian parties prowled New England searching for prisoners who might provide fuller information on English plans. How the Iroquois would react to this new situation was at first uncertain. A party of Onondagas who had stopped by at Fort Frontenac late in 1708 had assured the commanding officer, Hertel de la Fresnière, that they wanted no part of war. Vaudreuil was of course relying heavily on Joncaire and in April 1709 he ordered him to leave for the Iroquois and exercise all his influence to contain them in their state of neutrality. Joncaire, however, ran into almost immediate difficulties. To counterbalance his own influence and Longueuil's among the Iroquois, and also to persuade those Indians to grant passage to the Western tribes, Albany employed two agents, Lawrence Claase and the half-breed Montour. Late in April Montour was treacherously assassinated by Joncaire's men.⁶ While this event was taking place in the western reaches of the Confederacy, Abraham

5. Vaudreuil au ministre, 27 avril 1709, AC, C 11 A, vol. 30, p. 29.

6. For New York's version of this incident see Wraxall, pp. 64 - 65; Vaudreuil simply reported that Joncaire " [avait] fait casser la teste lui-même par ses gens ... a un nommé Montour... qui depuis deux ans travailloit a attirer chez eux [Albany] toutes les nations d'en haut." Vaudreuil au ministre, 14 novembre 1709, AC, C 11 A, vol. 30, p. 50v.

Schuyler and four Englishmen arrived among the Onondagas for the purpose of winning their support in the impending assault against Canada. He managed to convince the two Jesuit missionaries, Lamberville and Mareuil, that they would be risking their lives if they elected to stay on among the Onondagas. Oddly enough, the two missionaries took this warning at its face value and withdrew to Canada. No sooner had they gone than Schuyler induced the Onondagas to pillage and burn their house and the chapel.⁷ According to the younger Raudot, who later reviewed the events of that year, Joncaire should immediately have assembled the most influential Senecas and proceeded with them to Onondaga to bolster the French party in that village.⁸ Perhaps because he feared the consequences of Montour's assassination Joncaire refrained from doing so. Instead, he assumed that all was lost, sent his soldiers back to Fort Frontenac⁹ and allowed the Senecas to lead him back to the safety of New France with the Jesuit missionary, Father d'Heu, and the gunsmith.¹⁰ With the French gone the Onondagas yielded to the English and, following their example, the Oneidas and Cayugas yielded also. By July 16, 443 Iroquois had gone to Albany to swell the English force. Only the Senecas, the nation which had the most to fear from the blows of the western tribes,

7. Vaudreuil au ministre, 14 novembre 1709, Ibid., p. 46v.

8. A.D. Raudot au ministre, septembre 1709, Ibid., pp. 25lv - 252.

9. Copie d'une lettre de Joncaire à la Fresnière, 14 juin 1709, Ibid., p. 38; Vaudreuil au ministre, 14 novembre 1709, Ibid., pp. 47 v - 48.

10. Ibid., p. 50.

remained neutral.¹¹

Such basically is Vaudreuil's account of the developments in New York in the early part of 1709. He must have sensed that Joncaire's conduct was open to criticism for he made a special effort to defend him, as did Madame de Vaudreuil after arriving in France in the fall of that year.¹² This defense of the Seneca agent was all the more necessary at this time, since a quarrel had broken out between Vaudreuil and the Raudots. Influenced to a degree by personal animosity the younger intendant had sent to the minister a substantially different account of the events in New York which might easily have compromised the career of both Vaudreuil and Joncaire.

Pontchartrain had first begun having doubts on Joncaire after studying d'Aigremont's extensive report on the western posts submitted in November 1708. Although d'Aigremont concentrated most of his attention on Detroit, Niagara and Michilimackinac he had not failed to underline the close ties existing between Vaudreuil and Joncaire. He pointed out that each year, the governor sent Joncaire among the Iroquois with gifts valued at 2,000 livres, to be distributed as the Seneca agent saw fit. D'Aigremont suspected that Joncaire was using part of these gifts to carry on a private trade, for he usually returned from these voyages with furs whose value sometimes ran as high as 1000 écus. Moreover,

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11. This figure of 443 breaks down as follow: 105 Oneidas, 100 Cayugas, 150 Mohawks and 88 Onondagas. Wraxall, p. 69.
12. Vaudreuil au ministre, 14 novembre 1709, AC, C 11 A, vol. 30, pp. 50 - 50v; Madame de Vaudreuil au ministre, s.d., Ibid., p. 423v; Madame de Vaudreuil au ministre, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 31, p. 67v.

his phrasing suggested that Vaudreuil might be implicated in this commerce.¹³ Pontchartrain immediately asked the younger Raudot to investigate these accusations¹⁴ and the latter replied at length in September 1709.

According to the intendant, the crisis which had arisen in Franco-Iroquois relations stemmed primarily from Joncaire's attempts to remove the annual council of the Confederacy from Onondaga, where he had little influence, to the Senecas, where his power was considerable. This had antagonized the Onondagas who were already unhappy over the fact that Longueuil's visits to their settlements had been discontinued since 1705. Since then Iroquois affairs and the distribution of gifts had rested with Joncaire who favoured the Senecas, and the reason why the Onondagas had bolted the French entente was to show their discontent with such a policy. Vaudreuil who had disregarded Longueuil in order to increase the influence of Joncaire, was to be held directly responsible for this state of affairs. The young intendant concluded that to remedy the situation it would be necessary for Longueuil to resume his visits to Onondaga and to control the distribution of gifts. As for the possibility of war in 1709, Raudot minimized it: after the experiences of the previous war, the Iroquois could no longer hope to drive the French from America. But even if such a result was possible Raudot did not think that the Iroquois

13. "Au surplus, Monseigneur, je ne sais pas si Monsieur le marquis de Vaudreuil a quelque part a ce commerce"... d'Aigremont au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, pp. 34v - 35v.

14. Le ministre a A.D. Raudot, 6 juillet 1709, AC, B, vol. 32, p. 161 bis.

desired it. For, with the French gone, would they not become the slaves of the English?¹⁵ In other words the young intendant thought that Iroquois welfare required that America continue to be shared between France and England. How much truth there was to this report is difficult to say. But where Vaudreuil and Joncaire are concerned, the basic similarity between the statements of d'Aigremont and those of Raudot makes it difficult to avoid the conclusion that the governor had a stake in the voyages of the Seneca agent.

In early June 1709 the situation had deteriorated considerably. Warriors from four of the Five Nations had gone over to the English and most of the advantages of the treaty of 1701 appeared to be lost. Moreover, the information yielded by an English prisoner gave some indication of the size of the attacking force. The English fleet, which was assumed to have sailed from England on April 12, would consist of eight heavy warships and twenty-two lesser crafts. The landing force, including the colonial levies, would approximate 7,000 men.¹⁶ According to A.D. Raudot, Vaudreuil now began to show signs of nervousness and pessimism: "Monsieur de Vaudreuil nous a paru avoir bien peu d'assurance. Il nous paroît bien surprenant que luy qui devoit animer les autres nous dise que s'il nous attaquoit il nous auroit bientôt pris."¹⁷

15. A.D. Raudot au ministre, septembre 1709, AC, C 11 A, vol. 30, pp. 230 - 255v.

16. Interrogatoire du nommé Samuel Whiting, capturé le 2 juin 1709, fils d'un ministre établi à Dunstable, Ibid., pp. 141 - 142v.

17. A.D. Raudot au ministre, 30 juin 1709, AC, C 11 G, vol. 4, p. 211v.

The governor's alleged nervousness, however, is not apparent in his defensive strategy. In the middle of July he left for Quebec to assume personal direction of the defense preparations. Before leaving Montreal he ordered Ramezay to take 1,500 men and sail up the Richelieu in order to surprise the English in the midst of their preparations at the Wood Creek portage. Ramezay was instructed to avoid an engagement and limit himself to wrecking the boats and canoes and throwing the guns and ammunition into the river.¹⁸ After progressing up the Richelieu a certain distance, the governor of Montreal sent a scouting party ahead under his nephew, the scatter-brained la Pérade. The latter reported having discovered an advanced enemy camp in the vicinity of Crown Point but failed to mention that he had been seen by English scouts. This was only noticed when two Indian canoes ran headlong into an ambush. The element of surprise, which was essential for success, had now been lost and the entire army made a disorderly and tumultuous landing some two miles below Crown Point.¹⁹ A prisoner having informed Ramezay that three thousand men were standing by in three forts at Wood Creek, a council of war was held on August 2nd, and it was decided to retreat. In his quest for scapegoats, the infuriated governor of Montreal blamed the failure of the expedition on two scouts, de Montigny and Desruisseaux, and even had the latter jailed upon his return to Montreal. His relations with Vaudreuil were not

18. Mémoire à M. de Ramezay au sujet de son expédition dans le lac Champlain, 14 juillet 1709, AC, C 11 A, vol. 30, pp. 113 - 114.

19. Recueil de ce qui s'est passé... LeBlant, ed., pp. 260 - 264.

improved when the governor ordered Desruisseaux liberated.²⁰

Meantime, upon arriving in Quebec, Vaudreuil had been greeted by news from Costebelle, the governor of Newfoundland, and Subercase "qu'il n'y avoit rien de si certain que l'armement qui se faisoit à Baston estoit pour nous."²¹ The chief engineer, Le Vasseur de Néré, pressed the work being carried out on the palisades of the capital and ordered that concentric ditches be dug about the town to facilitate the tactics of the Canadians who constituted the bulk of the defenders.²² Vaudreuil, for his part, visited the outlying settlements, reviewed the militia, examined their weapons, and generally mingled with and encouraged the habitants. His task, he complained, without naming anyone but obviously alluding to the Raudots, was "d'autant plus difficile que ceux qui auroient du m'aider à engager les peuples à tout sacrifier pour se défendre estoient les premiers à leur insinuer qu'il estoit impossible que les ennemis viennent en ce pays."²³

Throughout the month of August and into September Quebec was on guard but the only alert came on the night of August 16 when a nervous scout mistakenly reported that the enemy fleet had been sighted in the lower St. Lawrence. But while the danger of an attack from Boston receded as summer waned into fall the situation on the Richelieu remained alarming. On September 17

20. Extrait de la lettre de Monsieur le marquis de Vaudreuil à Monsieur de Ramezay, 11 août 1709, AC, C 11 A, vol. 30, pp. 135 - 136.

21. Vaudreuil au ministre, 14 novembre 1709, Ibid., p. 56v.

22. Ibid., pp. 62 - 62v.

23. Ibid., pp. 58 - 58v.

Vaudreuil received word from Ramezay that the commander, Francis Nicholson, was preparing to lead his men down the river to seize Crown Point. Vaudreuil and the superior officers having judged that the season was now too far advanced for a fleet to attack Quebec, the governor was free to concentrate all his manpower at Chambly.²⁴ He could not have known at this time that the lake army had been ready to march since July 29 but that the order to do so hinged on news of the arrival of the fleet from England.²⁵ On October 11 Boston was advised that "for divers considerations Her Majesty had decided to lay aside at this time the designed expedition."²⁶ Great consternation reigned in that city where two public fast days had been kept for the safe arrival of the fleet. The citizens consoled themselves by cursing Vetch for the enormous expenses so needlessly incurred.²⁷

How Canada would have fared had the double attack materialized is highly problematical. Though outnumbered,²⁸ the French occupied strong positions, especially at Quebec, and any battle would have been a very contested affair. What mattered for the moment were the conclusions Vaudreuil had drawn from the experience. To strengthen the French position on the Richelieu he judged that a

24. Ibid., pp. 63 - 67.

25. Vetch to Sunderland, August 2 and 12, 1709, CSPA 1708 - 1709, p. 439.

26. Dudley, Nicholson, Vetch and Moody to the Earl of Sunderland, October 24, 1709, Ibid., pp. 488 - 489.

27. "Ils maudissent tous le sr. Veische et souhaiteroient qu'il fut pendu" reported a captured Englishman of the Bostonians. Copie d'une lettre de M. de Ramezay à M. le marquis de Vaudreuil, 19 octobre 1709, AC, C 11 A, vol. 30, p. 96v.

28. Vaudreuil claimed that he had 2350 men at Quebec and 1000 at Montreal. Vaudreuil au ministre, 14 novembre 1709, Ibid., pp. 60v - 62.

strong stone fort at Chambly was indispensable.²⁹ Hoping to force the war-weary inhabitants of New England to come to terms before they could organize a new attack, he increased the tempo of Indian raids on that province.³⁰ With regard to the Iroquois, in order to counterbalance New York's increased efforts to win their support, Vaudreuil now intensified the pressure from the West.³¹ Indeed, the fact that only 443 Iroquois had responded to the English appeal in 1709 was proof of the success of this policy, for this number represented less than one third of the total fighting force of the Confederacy. But although only a minority had rallied to the English, the Iroquois nation as a whole feared the consequences of this act and hurriedly mended their fences with the French. When Longueuil visited the Onondagas in the fall of 1709 he was received with much rejoicing. The Iroquois assured him that, notwithstanding English threats and promises, they would never raise the hatchet against the French.³² Early the following year the Mohawks and Onondagas visited the colony. The Mohawks - overlooking the fact that four of their chiefs were then in London demanding help for an attack on Canada - assured Vaudreuil of their desire for peace and explained that

29. A.D. Raudot au ministre, septembre 1709, Ibid., p. 245.

30. Vaudreuil au ministre, juin 1710, AC, C 11 A, vol. 31, pp. 4 - 4v; p. 44.

31. "Comme le véritable moyen de les [Iroquois] obliger à garder la neutralité est de leur faire craindre la guerre avec les Nations d'en haut, il [Vaudreuil] leur fait insinuer que ces nations n'attendent que ses ordres pour se déclarer contre eux" Vaudreuil au ministre extraits 1 mai 1710, Ibid., pp. 217v - 218.

32. Vaudreuil au ministre, 14 novembre 1709, AC, C 11 A, vol. 30, p. 82v.

it had only been under extreme pressure that they and Schuyler had taken up arms in 1709.³³ The Onondagas, as they had done consistently since 1702, asked Vaudreuil not to attack New York. For the first time, however, they boldly hinted that they would regard such an act as a casus belli.

Souvenez-vous mon père que chaque fois que je suis venu icy je vous ay demandé en grace de n'avoir point de guerre avec Pitre. Je vous le demande encore aujourd'huy. C'est le seul moyen de tenir vos enfans en paix.

The Onondagas, however, spoiled these strong beginnings by displaying an all too obvious fear of the Western Indians when they complained of the threatening attitude of the Ottawas. This provided Vaudreuil with a unique opportunity to intimate the consequences of an Iroquois invasion of Canada and he made his point with force. The Ottawas, he said, were devoted to him. When they saw the Iroquois in the English camp they had asked the governor whether they should strike. He had then refused this permission but should the Iroquois stray again from the path of neutrality not only the Ottawas but the French also would come down on them.³⁴ In the summer of 1710, with the diplomatic contest between the French and the English for supremacy over the Five Nations growing more intense, Joncaire and Longueuil repeatedly attempted to intimidate the Iroquois with this threat.³⁵

33. Parolles des Aniers du 26 mars 1710 envoyées par M. de Ramezay, AC, C 11 A, vol. 31, pp. 63 - 64.

34. Parolles des sauvages Onnontagués à M. le marquis de Vaudreuil, 28 janvier 1710, Ibid., pp. 89 - 95v.

35. See for example a speech of Longueuil to the Onondagas in CSPA 1710 - 1711, p. 491.

On the English side, although Lovelace had died in 1709, his policy was continued by his successor, Robert Hunter. No sooner had the new governor arrived in the colony than he journeyed to Albany where he summoned the Five Nations to a general assembly. After showering them with gifts, Hunter began his speech by proposing that the Anglo-Iroquois alliance, referred to as "the covenant chain," be solemnly renewed. The governor complimented them on allowing the Western Indians to come to Albany for "the only way to strengthen you and us and weaken the enemy is to have as many as possible brought into the covenant chain."³⁶ To prove their fidelity to the English he asked them to stop receiving French missionaries and deputies and to cease fighting the Flat-Heads. The Iroquois stated in reply that they were quite agreeable to renewing the covenant chain. They also declared themselves prepared to refuse the Jesuits but pointed out that the most effective way to get rid of them was to plant garrisons and ministers in their villages. They also asked that goods be made cheaper and beaver dearer, for as things stood, hunting beaver was almost not worth³⁷ while. In return for their active assistance the Iroquois were attempting to wring economic concessions from the English. Their main concern, however, at a time when, more than ever before, they were living under the menace of an attack by the western Indians, was to gain protection from the English before coming out for them.

Events in Acadia were to have an important bearing on the

36. On the trade carried out at Albany by the Western Indians see below pp. 177 - 178.

37. An account of Governor Hunter's Conference with the Indians at Albany, August 7, 1710, CSPA 1710 - 1711, pp. 490 - 499.

situation in Canada. In 1709, after the Canadian project had been deferred, New England decided that the forces at hand were sufficient for an attack on Port Royal. This project also had to be shelved when both New York and the English warships operating in American waters refused to cooperate,³⁸ but it was revived in 1710. Two thousand men, mostly British regulars, under the command of Francis Nicholson, landed in the vicinity of Port Royal and mounted their cannon on the strategic heights surrounding the fort. On Monday, October 2, after holding out for one week,³⁹ Subercase surrendered.

Pontchartrain was aware that several ships were fitting out for an attack against some part of French North America but insufficient funds reduced him to a state of practical impotence in the face of this threat. In May he sent out warnings to Vaudreuil, Costebelle and Subercase,⁴⁰ and in June he learned that Acadia was the objective of the attack. As part of a plan of general assistance, Vaudreuil was asked to help Acadia by sending soldiers, officers, food and ammunition to that colony.⁴¹ Pontchartrain himself was preparing to send men and supplies to both that province and Canada by the storeships la Loire and l'Affriquain.

38. Dudley, Nicholson, Vetch and Moody to Dunderland, October 24, 1709, CSPA 1708 - 1709, pp. 488 - 489.

39. G.M. Waller, Samuel Vetch, Colonial Enterpriser, pp. 182 - 186.

40. Le ministre à J. Raudot, 23 mai 1710, AC, B, vol. 32, p. 100; le ministre à Subercase, Costebelle et Vaudreuil.

41. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 7 juin 1710, Ibid., p. 398. Vaudreuil had already sent five officers to Subercase. When he learned that Acadia was threatened he sent two more with twenty soldiers. He also authorized Subercase to keep the levy of approximately sixty men which had been in Acadia since 1708, although it was intended for Canada. Vaudreuil au ministre, juin 1710, AC, C 11 A, vol. 31, pp. 4 - 4v.

By August, however, a depleted treasury made it impossible to follow the usual practice of operating these vessels at the expense of the state. Two Rochefort merchants, Daniaud and la Joue, finally agreed to underwrite the enterprise⁴² but by the time they and the minister had agreed on terms it was early September. L'Affriquain reached Canada in late October but Acadia capitulated before the arrival of la Loire.

The fall of Acadia created widespread alarm in both France and Canada. Recognizing British rule in that colony was of course out of the question⁴³ but plans of reconquest were hampered at every turn by lack of funds. Pontchartrain was hoping that Vaudreuil would take it upon himself to send an expedition against Port Royal that same winter, for there was little possibility of undertaking anything the following summer. Canada would probably be too busy at that time thinking of its own defense and furthermore a summer campaign would require naval support, something which the minister was in no position to grant.⁴⁴ He also suggested to Beauharnois, a former intendant of Canada and now intendant of the port of Rochefort, that he interest local

42. Le ministre à Desgoutins, 10 août 1710, AC, B, vol. 32, p. 141.

43. "Vous sçavez que par l'article des préliminaires nous cédon's l'isle de Terre-neuve aux Anglois et que si nous ne reprenons l'Acadie il ne nous restera plus aucun endroit par où nous pourrions soustenir quelque pesche. D'ailleurs ce pays est si près du Canada qu'il y auroit tout lieu de craindre qu'il n'en entraînant la perte si les Anglois en restoiént possesseurs... Je vous prie... de chercher tous les moyens qui pourront tendre au recouvrement d'un poste aussy important." Le ministre à Beauharnois, 24 décembre 1710, Ibid., p. 230.

44. Le ministre à Beauharnois, 24 décembre 1710, Ibid., p. 508v.

shipowners in founding an establishment at la Hève, on the eastern coast of Nova Scotia.⁴⁵ Although this was not as favorable a solution as driving the English from Port Royal it was less expensive and would enable the French to maintain a foothold in Acadia. Beauharnois, however, was unable to find anyone willing to undertake such an enterprise. In a last effort to form an expedition, Pontchartrain circulated an appeal in the principal seaports shipping to America: Rochefort, Nantes, St.Malo and Bayonne. It called upon shipowners to constitute a company which would finance the reconquest and receive in return generous trading privileges in Acadia.⁴⁶ Nothing came of this.

With France unable to make the effort necessary to reconquer Acadia, it devolved upon Vaudreuil to organize French and Indian resistance to English occupation. The situation created by the loss of this colony was extremely serious for the Abenakis of those regions now had no one to look to but the English for trade goods. The conquest had also subjected the Acadians to British rule, and Nicholson had not been slow to realize that he might use this situation to browbeat Vaudreuil. He informed the French governor that if the French and Indians continued their war on New England the Acadians would be treated with similar harshness. Furthermore, a New England delegation would arrive in Canada the following May to retrieve the prisoners detained in that colony.

45. Le ministre à Beauharnois, 20 février 1711, AC, B, vol. 33, pp. 246 - 247.

46. Le ministre à Beauharnois, 30 mars 1711, Ibid., p. 262v; le ministre à Lusancay, 30 mars 1711, Ibid., p. 266v; conditions sous lesquelles on peut proposer de former une compagnie pour reprendre l'Acadie, s.d., AC, C 11 D, vol. 7, pp. 103 - 104.

If Vaudreuil did not liberate them all, a like number of Acadians would be handed over to the Indians.⁴⁷ This dispatch was brought to Vaudreuil by John Livingston who arrived in Quebec on December 6 accompanied by the celebrated half-breed, St. Castin, who had been delegated by Subercase. It is interesting to note that the critical situation of the colony had not been allowed to dim the brightness of Quebec's social life, and during his stay in that city Livingston was lavishly entertained by the governor and intendant.⁴⁸

Vaudreuil's reply to Nicholson was taken to Boston by Rouville and Dupuis who were instructed to use this occasion to spy on the English. He professed great indignation at Nicholson's threats against the Acadians, which he labeled as "directement contraire à la bonne guerre." Vaudreuil also exculpated himself from all responsibility for the war and blamed it on Dudley who had not accepted the peace propositions put to him in 1705. As for the Indians, he used the classical Canadian argument that since they were not French subjects, the French could not be held responsible for their actions.⁴⁹ Vaudreuil had obviously suspected that Nicholson was bluffing and had accordingly refused to be intimidated. He was apparently right for although the war on New England continued the threats against the Acadians were not put into execution.

47. Lettre de M. Nicholson à M. le marquis de Vaudreuil, 11 octobre 1710, AC, C 11 A, vol. 31, pp. 129v - 131.

48. A journall of ye travails of major John Livingstone from Annapolis Royal in Nova Scotia to Quebec in Canada... begun October 15 and ended February 23, 1710 - 1711, CSPA 1710 - 1711, pp. 380 - 381.

49. Lettre à M. Nicholson du 14 janvier en réponse à la sienne du 14 octobre 1710, AC, C 11 A, vol. 31, pp. 121 - 125v.

Warding off Nicholson was one thing, but frustrating Dudley's intensified campaign at winning over the Abenakis was another. Even before the fall of Port Royal Dudley had suddenly changed his Indian policy, basing it on cajolery rather than repression. Instead of seeking vengeance on the Abenakis for their acts of violence Dudley was now pointing out to them how much better off they would be if they were at peace with the English. They could then obtain trade goods at prices the French could not possibly match. Using the influence of the missionaries Vaudreuil was able to foil this strategy but to eliminate permanently the danger of an Anglo-Abenaki alliance he suggested, like Subercase and Ramezay before him, that the king send to Canada from 12,000 to 15,000 livres value of trade goods. "C'est peu de chose pour sa Ma'té et ce seroit un coup d'état pour ce pays par rapport aux sauvages."⁵⁰

In order to keep the Acadians and Indians in the French interest and induce them to carry on the war against the English, Vaudreuil instructed the missionaries to tell the inhabitants that he intended giving them all the help in his power.⁵¹ In January 1711, the underground acquired a chief in the person of St.Castin who was sent back to Acadia invested with the powers

50. Vaudreuil au ministre, 3 novembre 1710, Ibid., pp. 52 - 54. The minister replied that "la proposition... seroit très bonne si on estoit en état de l'exécuter mais cela n'est pas possible quant à présent parce qu'il faudroit de l'argent comptant pour cet achat et que Sa Ma'té n'est pas en estat d'en donner". Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 7 juillet 1711, AC, B, vol. 33, pp. 315 - 315v.

51. Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 avril 1711, AC, C 11 A, vol. 32, pp. 28v - 29.

of commandant for the whole region. His duties, as set forth in his instructions,⁵² consisted principally of preventing the English settled at Port Royal from establishing economic ties with the Abenakis. To achieve this end he was instructed to attack and rob the English merchants or their agents, both French and English, whom he discovered carrying merchandise toward the Abenaki settlements. Drawing perhaps his inspiration from A.D. Raudot's statement on Iroquois policy, Vaudreuil asked St.Castin to impress upon the Indians the importance of maintaining a balance of power in America. Should the English ever become sole masters of the continent they would reduce the Abenakis to slavery or have them destroyed. Now more than ever, it was essential that they remain allies to the French.

Upon arriving in Acadia St. Castin lost no time in getting down to work. In June 1711 he ordered 40 Abenakis to prowl in the vicinity of Port Royal and annoy the British garrison. The Indians were cautiously proceeding along a river toward the town when they spotted seventy Englishmen in three pirogues. After scattering along the riverbank the Indians shouted at them to surrender. The Englishmen replied with a burst of gunfire. In turn the Abenakis fired deadly volleys at the crowded pirogues, killed twenty of their occupants, wounded several others, and then swam out into the river to capture the crafts. This incident presented the French with a unique opportunity to retake Port Royal. The Acadians, who had hitherto been well disposed toward the British,⁵³ now joined the Abenakis for an attack on

52. Ordres et Instructions de M. de Vaudreuil pour le baron de St. Castin, 18 janvier 1711, AC, C 11 D, vol. 7, p. 129.

53. Lettre de St.Castin aux habitants de la banlieue de Port Royal, 3 septembre 1711, AC, C 11 D, vol. 7, pp. 175 - 175v.

the town. Only the absence of experienced officers kept the expedition from getting under way.⁵⁴ Vaudreuil, who was aware of these developments, was on the point of sending two hundred regulars and militia to Acadia when news received on August 6, that Walker's gigantic armada was preparing to sail on Quebec, forced him to abandon his plan.⁵⁵

This was not the first warning Vaudreuil had received. As early as the previous March Pontchartrain had warned him that preparations were under way in England for an attack on Canada.⁵⁶ Several other reports followed so that doubts on the expedition, or its size, could no longer be entertained.⁵⁷ The minister was aroused to the situation and doing what he could to reinforce Canada. Indeed, he had not been allowed to forget its needs. Madame de Vaudreuil, who was then at court, was bombarding him with reports explaining the importance of sending men and supplies to the colony.⁵⁸ Since the King's vessel, le Héros, could not sail before May, ninety soldiers, muskets and gunpowder were rushed out by three merchantmen sailing from la Rochelle and Marseille.⁵⁹ Meantime, la Jolie, who had provided the funds to

54. Christophe Cahouet au ministre, 20 juillet 1711, Ibid., pp. 173 - 174v; l'abbé Gaulin au ministre, 5 septembre 1711, Ibid., pp. 177 - 181.

55. Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 octobre 1711, AC, C 11 A, vol. 32, pp. 48-50.

56. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 11 mars 1711, AC, B, vol. 33, p. 25lv.

57. Mémoire du Roy au sr. marquis de Vaudreuil, 7 juillet 1711, AC, B, vol. 33, pp. 307 - 307v.

58. Le ministre à Beauharnois, 20 février 1711, Ibid., p. 247; le ministre à Madame de Vaudreuil, 13 mai 1711, AM, B 2, vol. 227, pp. 671 - 672.

59. Mémoire du Roy au sr. marquis de Vaudreuil, 7 juillet 1711, AC, B, vol. 33, p. 296; le ministre à Beauharnois, 14 mars 1711, Ibid., p. 257; le ministre à Beauvais, 14 mars 1711, Ibid., p. 258.

fit out l'Affriquain in 1710, refused to underwrite the voyage of le Héros. Fortunately, other merchants interested in the Canadian trade came to the rescue. Aubert, Néret and Gayot, despite the fact that they were entitled to ship their beaver free of freight charges on the King's vessels, contributed 10,000 livres. Others advanced the return freight rates. By these expedients it could be said that "le Héros... fut armé sans qu'il en coute un sol au trésorier de la marine."⁶⁰

Early in 1711 Vaudreuil had realized that extraordinary measures would have to be taken to overcome the demoralizing effects of the fall of Port Royal and to counter Hunter's increasing pressure on the Iroquois. The course of action he and the intendant finally elected was a spectacular one. It consisted of calling delegations from all the western tribes to a meeting in Montreal the following summer. The sight of these allies, it was calculated, would bolster the sagging morale of the population, which was now living in constant fear of an Iroquois war, and would frighten New York by showing that, despite their commerce with Albany, Vaudreuil was still the master of the western tribes.⁶¹ With regard to the Confederacy itself, calling the Upper tribes to Montreal was the ultimate threat, short of war. Vaudreuil even thought that the Iroquois might panic at the sight of their old enemies gathered on their door-step and he accordingly sent Longueuil to Onondaga to make it clear that the Five Nations had

60. Mémoire sur le Canada, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 32, p. 183. Le Héros carried two full companies, lately posted in Acadia, 28 recruits, 200 muskets, 21,000 measures of gunpowder, and 13,000 measures of shot. Ibid., p. 183.

61. Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 avril 1711, AC, C 11 A, vol. 32, pp. 26 - 26v.

nothing to fear as long as they remained neutral. Vaudreuil, however, would exercise his "juste vengeance" should they side with the English.⁶²

The pressure bearing down on the Iroquois from both sides was fast becoming unbearable. Such a situation, which might have proved the undoing of Europe's most experienced statesmen, was the moment chosen by the inscrutable Onondagas to engineer a brilliant diplomatic coup. First, they pretended to yield to the French by allowing Longueuil to build a fortified house in their village. As was to be expected this brought Peter Schuyler rushing onto the scene. In return for the permission to destroy the building, the Iroquois extracted from Schuyler the pledge they had been unable to get since the beginning of the war, that if the French should fall on them the English would come to their assistance.⁶³ The Iroquois now felt freer to act. By August 20, 682 of them, including 182 Senecas, were in the English camp.⁶⁴ Vaudreuil's strategy had miscarried but the Iroquois delegation which arrived in Canada in June with Longueuil and Joncaire threw a smokescreen in front of their manoeuvres. They informed the governor that while he could count on the fidelity of several of their warriors,

62. Ibid., p. 30.

63. This incident is described at length in "Journal of Col. Schuyler's negotiations with the Indians at Onondage", May 27, 1711, CSPA 1710 - 1711, pp. 535 - 540. By 1712 the English had begun carrying out their promise. A fort and chapel had been built in the Mohawk country staffed by an officer and 20 men. Construction of a second fort was scheduled to begin shortly among the Onondagas. Hunter to the Council of Trade and Plantations, October 31, 1712, CSPA 1712 - 1714, p. 84.

64. Wraxall, p. 91

great numbers had been won to the English by gifts and the conviction that New France could not repulse the massive forces that were preparing to attack it.⁶⁵

While these events were taking place, between four and five hundred Western Indians were meeting in Montreal.⁶⁶ These Indians had begun arriving in the colony in June and Vaudreuil was using this opportunity to arbitrate the increasingly serious differences that were developing between them. The climax to the meetings was reached at a banquet on August 7, attended by eight hundred allies, including the mission Indians. On this occasion, Joncaire and la Chavignerie, the Onondaga interpreter, raised the hatchet in the presence of the Iroquois observers and began the war song against New York. The mission Indians immediately answered with shouts of approval but the western allies at first maintained a stony silence, fearing to lose the advantages of their trade with Albany.⁶⁷ After an agonizing interlude, during which the fate of New France practically hung in the balance, the twenty Hurons from Detroit raised the symbolic hatchet and joined in the war song. One by one the other delegates joined in until all eight hundred of them were shouting their defiance at New York.

Like Vaudreuil, Hunter had been quite active during the summer of 1711. The governor of New York was sending wampum belts to

65. Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 octobre 1711, AC, C 11 A, vol. 32, p. 46v.

66. Ibid., p. 47.

67. "Quelques uns ballancèrent longtemps entre l'envie de se déclarer et la crainte de se fermer par là le chemin d'aller aux Anglois. Car enfin, Monseigneur, toutes les nations d'en haut y vont". Ibid., p. 52.

the mission Indians to inform them that they would be safe as long as they remained in their villages but would be instantly destroyed should they join with the French to oppose the invading army. Vaudreuil travelled from one mission to the next, retrieving these belts and emphasizing his argument that the French presence in America was necessary to save the Indians from destruction at the hands of the English. The governor's words, joined to the persuasive powers of the missionaries, kept the Indians faithful to the French during these crucial months.⁶⁸ Otherwise, however, his strategy had only met with partial success. The meeting of the western Indians had not prevented half the Confederacy from going over to the English. Furthermore, the moments of hesitation these Indians had experienced before coming out for the French were probably more significant than the noisy demonstration they had subsequently put on. They were also anxious to be off to their winter hunting grounds and Vaudreuil had been obliged to release most of them by the end of August, keeping only a few as a symbol of their alliance with the French.⁶⁹ Before dismissing the Iroquois on August 31, the governor spoke to them a final time. He reminded them of how he had always scrupulously observed the treaty of 1701. Now, however, New York had declared war on Canada and this obliged him to send war parties into that province to obtain information. The Iroquois, who by now had already committed themselves, told the governor they agreed with his argument.⁷⁰

68. Ibid., pp. 53v - 54.

69. Ibid., pp. 52 - 52v.

70. Parolles de M. le Gouverneur Général aux Onnontagués et Sonnon-touans qui s'en retournent, 31 août 1711, AC, C 11 A, vol. 32, pp. 100 - 102v.

Vaudreuil had now done all he could in the district of Montreal. Indeed the fact that he had remained there for so long clearly indicates that he feared the consequences of an Iroquois attack on Montreal far more than those of a New England assault on Quebec. It was only on September 7 that he left for that city.

The story of the ill-fated Walker expedition is too well known to be retold⁷¹ once more here. On September 25 a scout named Joseph Guyon arrived in Quebec with the news that, on September 9, ninety to ninety-six enemy ships were somewhere between Matane and Cap Chat. There must have been something seriously wrong with Vaudreuil's intelligence service for on that date Walker was already heading for home. A few days later it was reported that the fleet, which by then was down to 84 sails, had been sighted off Gaspé. Work at Quebec was intensified and parties guarded the St. Lawrence coast from la Malbaie to Quebec and from Kamouraska to Pointe Lévis. Meantime, in response to Vaudreuil's appeal for reinforcements, Ramezay was hurrying to Quebec with six hundred men, leaving his government in the hands of Longueuil with seven hundred French and 350 Indians. Gallifet, governor of Three Rivers, was coming down with every able-bodied man of his district and the Abenakis of St. François and Bécancour. They arrived in the capital on October 3 at the same time as du Tisné, who was coming from the lower St. Lawrence with the news that le Héros was approaching Quebec after an uneventful trip up the river. When a

71. See especially G.S. Graham, ed. The Walker Expedition to Quebec, 1711. (Champlain Society Publications, Toronto 1953), passim.

second vessel, arriving before Quebec a few days later, reported having made the journey up the St. Lawrence without sighting the enemy fleet, Vaudreuil concluded that the English had turned back and that it was now safe to shift most of the defenders to the Richelieu. The situation there was following much the same course as in 1709. When Nicholson learned that Walker had turned back after losing seven ships off Sept Iles on the night of August 22 - 23, the lake army broke up. All Vaudreuil had to do was send a detachment of 180 men as far as the Wood Creek portage to burn the boats and canoes that might have been left behind.⁷²

The Walker expedition, which was supposed to have sealed the doom of New France, had failed completely. Moreover, the enormous expenses incurred over the past three years by England, Massachusetts and New York would discourage further attempts against Canada for many years to come. As for Vaudreuil, he informed the minister that he would have liked to see the enemy appear before Quebec. With the regulars and militia in such high spirits and so intent upon giving a good account of themselves, he was certain of victory. "Mais d'un autre costé", he added, "je loue Dieu du plus profond de mon coeur d'avoir conservé ce pauvre peuple sans qu'il nous en ait couté une seule goutte de sang, sans mesme que nos ennemis nous ayent fait le moindre tort."⁷³

As the danger of English attack vanished, all that remained was the problem of the Iroquois. Their behavior in 1709 and 1711 could leave little doubt that their policy was closely tied to

72. Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 octobre 1711, AC, C 11 A, vol. 31, pp. 55 - 62.

73. Ibid., p. 62v.

that of the English. In fact Claude de Ramezay thought, quite wrongly, that it was completely subservient to it.⁷⁴ Vaudreuil, although he most probably shared Ramezay's ill-founded opinion, was strongly opposed to any act of reprisal:

Il est de notre intérêt, Monseigneur, de n'avoir aucune guerre avec cette nation tant qu'il nous sera possible, et les Cinq Villages Iroquois sont plus à craindre que la Nouvelle-Angleterre... L'expérience de vingt quatre ans me fait connoistre que cette guerre ne convient nullement à cette colonie. Je ne say que trop combien il nous en a couté et combien les peuples en ont eu de la peine à s'en relever.⁷⁵

As for the Iroquois, after the failure of Walker's expedition, they found themselves in much the same position as before 1709 and it was therefore important for them to effect a reconciliation with the French. In their next visit to the colony they assured Vaudreuil that it had never been their intention to carry out an actual attack on Canada. It was simply to receive gifts from the English that they had joined forces with them. Although the governor knew that there was little truth to this explanation, he pretended to be satisfied with it.⁷⁶ But, in order to satisfy Pontchartrain, who insisted that Vaudreuil use severity with the

74. "... ce qu'ils ont fait contre nous nous doit persuader que toutes les fois que l'Anglois fera quelque entreprise sur cette colonie ils se joindront à eux pour nous faire la guerre." Ramezay au ministre, 1 novembre 1711, AC, C 11 A, vol. 32, p. 110.

75. Vaudreuil au ministre, 8 novembre 1711, Ibid., p. 67v.

76. Vaudreuil au ministre, 12 novembre 1712, AC, C 11 A, vol. 33, pp. 20v - 21.

77

Iroquois, if not in deed at least in word,⁷⁷ the governor remonstrated with them over their conduct in the past year.

Now that the English had withdrawn their support it could have been assumed that the Iroquois would promptly resume their policy of non-provocation. Yet, in 1712, they came within an inch of attacking the Western Indians and plunging Canada into war.

In order to appreciate the reasons for this attack it must be realized that, since 1702, the Iroquois had been living under the constant menace of the Upper Nations. As already pointed out, a year hardly went by without some act of provocation taking place. These dangerous incidents had continued after 1709 but each time Vaudreuil's skillful arbitration saved the situation. In August 1710, a band of Sauteurs killed two Iroquois near Fort Frontenac.⁷⁸ Later the same year a party of Poutouatamis met a group of Senecas and brought them back to their village as prisoners. The elders ordered their immediate release but a Poutouatami warrior, who had old scores to settle with the Five Nations, cut the ears off two of the captives. Vaudreuil was able to calm the outraged Senecas by having two slaves delivered to them.⁷⁹ By now, however, Iroquois patience was wearing thin. These proud Indians feared that the Ottawas might attribute to cowardice their refusal to

77. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 15 juin 1712, AC, B, vol. 34, p. 310; le ministre à Vaudreuil, 25 juin 1712, Ibid., p. 348; le ministre à Ramezay, 15 juin 1712, Ibid., p. 310.

78. Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 2 novembre 1710, AC, C 11 A, vol. 31, pp. 27v - 28.

79. Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 2 novembre 1710, AC, C 11 A, vol. 31, pp. 27 - 27v.

strike back. At a conference in Montreal in August 1710 the Onondaga and Seneca deputies proudly stated that if the Ottawas still existed as a nation they had only Vaudreuil to thank for it. Had it not been for the governor's instructions not to strike back, that nation would have felt long ago the full force of Iroquois anger.⁸⁰

The meeting of the western Indians in Montreal in 1711 had increased the uneasiness of the Iroquois and added to already existing tensions. Then, in 1712, the ferocious striking power of the Upper Nations was demonstrated at the battle of Detroit where, in conjunction with the French garrison, they annihilated close to one thousand Fox and Maskoutin Indians.⁸¹ Vaudreuil feared that the alliance concluded between the Fox and the Iroquois two years previously might send the latter to war. It was Peter Schuyler, however, who hit upon the strategy the English might have used long before had they not feared it would cause them to lose the commerce of the West. Instead of inciting the Iroquois to a frontal assault on New France he urged them on against the Western tribes knowing that the French would have to come to the aid of their allies. Schuyler pointed out to the Five Nations that they had to destroy the western Indians before being made to share the fate of the Fox and Maskoutins.⁸² The Iroquois responded to this appeal as to none previously. The

80. Parolles des Iroquois Sonnontouans et Onnontagués à M. le marquis de Vaudreuil, 8 août 1710, Ibid., pp. 98 - 101.

81. Dubuisson [commandant at Detroit] au ministre, 1712, AC, C 11 A, vol. 33, p. 178v.

82. Vaudreuil au ministre, 15 octobre 1712, Ibid., p. 47.

Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas and Cayugas began to assemble and soon between 1,000 and 1,200 of them were under arms.⁸³ For a time it looked as if Canada would be put through the ordeal of a third Iroquois war.

What saved Canada on this occasion was the attitude of the Senecas, who refused to act the part of a shield to the other four nations against the inroads of the Ottawas as they had done during the previous war.⁸⁴ The Senecas knew that the other Iroquois would not move until they were sure of their co-operation. In order to keep the project from getting under way forty-five of their deputies came down to Montreal where they remained until this crisis, the last major one to occur before the conclusion of peace, was over.

In 1713 New France emerged from an extremely critical period without having sustained a single attack by the English or the Iroquois. There can be no doubt that this was principally due to the misfortune which dogged the English at every step. Had their fleet arrived before Quebec in either 1709 or 1711 the lake army would have advanced on Montreal and both New France and Vaudreuil's strategy would have been put to the test on two fronts. But no attack took place so that it will never be known just how well New France would have resisted. Largely because of this Vaudreuil's policy has never been fully appreciated although analysis shows it to be sound and well adapted to the situation at hand. With regard to the Iroquois, whom he always regarded as the principal menace, his policy of intimidation

83. Loc. cit., Vaudreuil au ministre, 6 novembre 1712, Ibid., p. 55v.

84. Ibid., pp. 57 - 57v.

frightened a substantial number away from the English. Despite New York's efforts to draw the mission Indians away from their Canadian alliance they always remained faithful to the French. In Acadia, in conjunction with the missionaries, he was making a start toward filling the large breach created by the loss of that province.

From the point of view of the habitants, who understood little of high strategy, there can be no doubt that during this period Vaudreuil struck deep roots in their esteem and affection. During ten years of war the dreaded Iroquois had been kept off their settlements and not one English gun had been fired on Canadian soil. By 1713 Vaudreuil's name must have become strongly associated with the idea of peace and security and this was to lay much of the groundwork for the power and honours that accrued to him during the second part of his administration.

CHAPTER VII

The Detroit Experiment

Two aspects of the history of the West in the early 18th century have received considerable attention in previous chapters. In the first place it has been shown that the western Indians were largely responsible for keeping the Iroquois in awe during the War of the Spanish Succession. But, at the same time, it was noted that these Indians were taking much of their trade to Albany. The increasing economic dependence of the Western tribes on New York posed a serious threat to French ascendancy over them for it was well known, in both French and English colonial circles, that whoever held an Indian nation's commerce usually held its allegiance. The ever present possibility of the English wresting the West from French control by means of their stronger economy constituted the basic problem facing Vaudreuil in those regions. Before 1696, the governors of New France had disposed of strong tools for their dealings with the western Indians. The beaver boom made it economically profitable to be associated with Canada and furthermore the presence of garrisons in the West kept those tribes under constant French surveillance. Vaudreuil's hand, however, was weakened by a depressed economy and the restrictive system which was its political expression. Furthermore, his authority in that area was but a shadow of that of his precursors. From 1701 to 1709, in practice and almost in theory, the West was controlled by la Mothe-Cadillac.

Basically la Mothe-Cadillac was an adventurer who perpetuated in Canada's frontier society the tradition of Cavelier de la Salle. Under the pretext of promoting the interests of France in the region of the Great Lakes, Cadillac was in reality attempting to build his personal fortune and Detroit was never meant to be anything but a framework for his fur-trading operations. His western system, however, was also a grave threat to Canadian interests in those regions and therein lies the profound reason for his quarrel with Vaudreuil. Cadillac's personal power also explains the unstable basis of the governor's position in the early years of his administration. It is no mere coincidence that the process of consolidation only began after the downfall of Cadillac in 1709.

Cadillac had been at Detroit almost two years when Vaudreuil became governor in June 1703 and his settlement was under way. One of the first tasks he set himself after arriving there consisted of attracting the western tribes to his post. By the fall of 1702, groups of Hurons, Ottawas, Wolves and a few Miamis had responded to his appeal and settled near the French fort.¹ This migration had split the powerful Ottawa nation, for many of them had refused to budge from Michilimackinac. Cadillac attributed their negative attitude to the influence of the Jesuits and he informed the minister that if Detroit was to come into its own it would first be necessary to order the missionaries to abandon that mission.² In other parts of this dispatch he emphasized

1. la Mothe-Cadillac au ministre, 25 septembre 1702, AC, C 11 E, vol. 14, pp. 118v - 119.

2. Ibid., pp. 122v - 123.

the successful beginnings of his settlement, but his statements were in open contradiction with those of Callières. Cadillac claimed that in the short space of one year Detroit had become self-sufficient.³ In November of 1702, however, the governor had ordered the recall of everyone except twenty-five soldiers, fearing that the scarcity of game in those quarters would expose a larger population to starvation.⁴ Moreover, the prediction the governor had made in 1700, that Detroit would facilitate commercial intercourse between the western allies and New York, seemed to be materializing. A group of Indians, who had relocated from Sault-Ste.-Marie, had gone to Albany to trade and brought back wampum belts inviting the others to follow their example.⁵

Pontchartrain had been overwhelmed by a torrent of conflicting reports since the foundation of Detroit in 1701. He now ordered the governor to summon the Canadian notables to an assembly where every aspect of the new settlement could be examined and discussed in detail.⁶ Since Callières was dead when these instructions arrived, carrying them out became Vaudreuil's responsibility. The assembly, which met on November 4, 1703, reflected the climate of opinion which generally prevailed in the colony by deciding unanimously against keeping the post.⁷ Cadillac, however, had not been represented and he attempted to discredit the decision

3. Ibid., p. 119v.

4. Callières au ministre, 4 novembre 1702, AC, C 11 A, vol. 20, pp. 169v - 170.

5. Ibid., p. 170.

6. Mémoire du Roy à Callières et Beauharnois, 20 juin 1703, AC, B, vol. 23, p. 198.

7. Vaudreuil et Beauharnois au ministre, 15 novembre 1703, AC, C 11 A, vol. 21, p. 7v.

by claiming that only his enemies had been allowed by the doors.⁸

What Cadillac was attempting to do was to minimize the deep resentment which smouldered in Canada as a result of his monopolistic system.⁹ As long as his views prevailed the West would be closed to the Canadian merchant community. Their only hope lay in the re-establishment of the congés and because Vaudreuil also favored this he may have found himself playing the role of champion of the popular cause. Cadillac, however, also had his partisans, notably Claude de Ramezay and the formidable Ruelle d'Auteuil, attorney-general of the Superior Council and one of the directors of the Company of the Colony. D'Auteuil's hostility toward Vaudreuil apparently originated in 1704. At that time the question had arisen of sending a deputy to France to protest to the minister against the impossible conditions laid down by Goy, du Moulin and Mercier when they agreed to act as correspondents for the Company of the Colony. D'Auteuil and his group had their candidate ready in the person of the younger Aubert, son of Aubert de la Chesnaye, the great seventeenth century merchant. Claiming to act on popular demand, Vaudreuil and the intendant Beauharnois vetoed this choice and appointed another merchant, the sr. Pascaud.¹⁰ To motivate this action, they claimed that Aubert would have been less interested in attending to the affairs of the Company than in looking after his own and

8. Mémoire de la Mothe Cadillac touchant l'établissement du Détroit de Quebec, 14 novembre 1704, MPHC, vol. 33, p. 207.

9. For the principal features of this system, see p. 157

10. Vaudreuil et Beauharnois au ministre, 17 novembre 1704, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, pp. 4v - 5v.

those of his friends.¹¹ This episode kindled a lasting enmity between the attorney-general and the governor. Thereafter, D'Auteuil, Ramezay and Cadillac would repeatedly accuse Vaudreuil of being in league with a faction led by his uncle Chartier de Lotbinière, first councillor of the Superior Council and also director of the Company of the Colony.¹² This accusation had an important bearing on the attitude of Pontchartrain toward both Vaudreuil and Cadillac.

Although it is possible that Vaudreuil's hostility toward Cadillac was determined to a certain extent by clashing ambitions and connection with rival economic interests¹³ the fundamental cause of the quarrel must be looked for elsewhere. In part it may have been due to a clash of personalities. Vaudreuil made no attempt to hide his dislike for Cadillac and on one occasion even stated that he felt little but contempt for the founder of Detroit.¹⁴ But basically it was the result of Vaudreuil's conviction that a West reconstructed around Detroit and under the command of Cadillac was a menace to Canada. "Si jamais l'Anglois lie un commerce considérable avec nos alliés ce sera le Détroit

11. Ibid., pp. 25v - 26.

12. Ramezay au ministre, 14 novembre 1704, Ibid., pp. 73v - 74; [Ruelle D'Auteuil] mémoire sur l'administration de la justice en Canada, 17 octobre 1705, RAPQ 1922 - 1923, p. 16; la Mothe-Cadillac au ministre, [abst.] AC, C 11 A, vol. 23, p. 146.

13. d'Auteuil explained Vaudreuil's hostility by "le déplaisir violent de voir établir dans un poste capable de traverser ses commerces un homme placé d'une autre main que la sienne et sur lequel il ne pouvoit pas compter pour les desseins de son avarice." Mémoire de l'estat présent du Canada, 1712, AC, C 11 A, vol. 33, pp. 269v - 270.

14. Vaudreuil au ministre, 12 novembre 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 26, p. 63v.

qui en sera la cause," he wrote to Pontchartrain in 1703 after learning that the Hurons were dickering with the Iroquois for the purpose of obtaining a right of way to Albany.¹⁵ The events of the following year confirmed the accuracy of his prediction. Not only had five canoes then gone to Albany but a group of Hurons, Ottawas and Miamis had met with the Senecas to maintain peace and ask for the privilege of trade with the English.¹⁶ These developments, which were nothing short of revolutionary, threatened to undermine the very basis of Canada's Indian policy. As Vaudreuil, Ramezay and Champigny stated on different occasions it was not only necessary to preserve peace but also to maintain the Upper Nations and the Iroquois in a state of mutual distrust.¹⁷

The system best designed to bring this about and which Vaudreuil would fight for during his entire administration consisted of a West centered on Michilimackinac and patrolled by congé holders. Detroit, shorn of its pretenses of becoming a new colony and the place of residence of all the Western tribes, would fit into this system as one of several trading posts.¹⁸

15. Vaudreuil au ministre, 14 novembre 1703, AC, C 11 A, vol. 21, p. 53.

16. Vaudreuil au ministre, 16 novembre 1704, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, p. 36v; Parolles des sauvages du Détroit... aux Iroquois sonnontouans le 30 juillet 1704... Réponses des Sonnontouans... le 31 juillet 1704, AC, F 3, vol. 2, pp. 310 - 312.

17. Commenting on the negotiations under way between Hurons and Iroquois, Champigny stated: "Cela fait voir qu'il n'est pas à propos d'approcher si fort des Iroquois, les Outaouais, Hurons et autres sauvages. Il faut tacher de faire en sorte, adroitement, qu'ils ne soient jamais trop bons amis." Commentaires de Champigny sur les paroles des sauvages Hurons à M. de Vaudreuil, 14 juillet 1703, AC, C 11 A, vol. 21, pp. 74 - 74v; see also Ramezay au ministre, 12 novembre 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 27, p. 7v.

18. Champigny conceded that "ce Détroit est nécessaire. Il n'y a que la manière de le faire valoir." la Mothe-Cadillac au ministre, 31 août 1703, [abst.] AC, C 11 E, vol. 14, p. 142.

The speeches of the delegates of the principal western tribes to Vaudreuil in 1703 also indicated that such a system was the one they favoured.¹⁹ Furthermore, the attack which the Michilimackinac Ottawas had carried out against the Senecas in the summer of 1704²⁰ seemed to demonstrate the necessity of implementing, at least in part, Vaudreuil's policy. These Ottawas, embittered by the migration of so many of their kinsmen to Detroit, had attacked the Iroquois in the hope that the prospect of a new war would frighten them into retreating to Michilimackinac.²¹ One can wonder if this project would have been put into execution had a French commander been present among them.

Cadillac, however, could not countenance a plan which would so drastically have reduced his importance and that of Detroit. In his dispatch of June 1703 he reiterated the importance of strengthening Detroit by means of a strong garrison, a civilian population and by abolishing all congés and maintaining it as the unique post in the West.²² It is too often assumed that the main obstacle to the reoccupation of the ancient posts was the bankrupt condition of the beaver trade. Detroit posed as great a barrier. In June 1704 Pontchartrain plainly told Vaudreuil that, for fear of hindering Ottawa immigration to Detroit, he was to refrain from sending a commanding officer to Michilimackinac.²³

19. Parolles des Miamis, 5 août [1703], AC, C 11 A, vol. 21, p. 68; Parolles des sauvages outaouais de Missilimackinac, 2 septembre 1703, Ibid., pp. 70 - 71.

20. For the consequences of this attack, see above p.77 passim.

21. Vaudreuil au ministre, 16 novembre 1704, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, p. 36v.

22. la Mothe-Cadillac au ministre, 31 août 1703, AC, C 11 E, vol. 14, p. 14lv.

23. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Beauharnois, 14 juin 1704, AC, B, vol. 25, p. 133.

By 1704, two projects for Detroit had been submitted to Pontchartrain. The first one was put forward by the company of the Colony to whom Detroit had been granted to enable it to control beaver production throughout the colony.²⁴ Appalled by the enormous losses it had incurred while operating this post²⁵ the company proposed to dismiss the officers and garrison and operate it on a purely commercial basis.²⁶ A good percentage of these losses can be explained by the fact that Cadillac had been the commanding officer and, it seems, purposely mismanaged the enterprise in order to force the company to abandon it.²⁷ At the same time, in his dispatches to court, he was offering to take over Detroit at his own risk and expense should the company find the upkeep too expensive.²⁸ Angered by their employee's duplicity, the directors of the Company resolved to bring him to justice. Thus, when Cadillac appeared in the colony in the fall of 1704 he was placed on trial before the governor and intendant on a variety of charges connected with his administration of Company affairs at Detroit. In order to extricate himself from this situation, Cadillac resorted to the stratagem he had used six years earlier in a lawsuit with two coureurs de bois, Moreau

24. Mémoire de la direction de la Compagnie de la Colonie de Canada, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 21, p. 139v.

25. The losses for 1702 and 1703 amounted to 42998 livres Estat présent des affaires de la Compagnie de la Colonie de Canada, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, p. 100.

26. Ibid., p. 100v.

27. "Bien loin de s'appliquer à procurer quelque profit à la compagnie, [Cadillac] a mis tout en usage pour luy causer une perte considérable afin de l'obliger d'abandonner ce commerce pour en profiter en se le faisant accorder à la ruine de la compagnie." Les directeurs de la Compagnie au ministre, 7 août 1704, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, p. 113v.

28. la Mothe-Cadillac au ministre, [abst.] 31 août 1703, AC, C 11 E, vol. 14, pp. 145 - 145v.

and Durand. He challenged Vaudreuil's right to act as judge on the grounds of his relationship with Lotbinière, one of the plaintiffs, and Beauharnois' because of alleged partiality in the case.²⁹ His next step was to attack Lotbinière himself. This director, he stated, had brought him to trial to render him suspect and prevent him from testifying against two of the Company's Detroit clerks, Arnaud and Nolan, who were guilty of fraudulent practices. Cadillac claimed that Lotbinière shamelessly protected these two men because one was his son-in-law and the other related to his friend, Martin de Lino.³⁰ With Ramezay backing this version of the affair³¹ Cadillac escaped with nothing more severe than a feeble reprimand from Pontchartrain.³² Indeed, the episode may simply have strengthened the minister in his belief that Cadillac was the victim of organized persecution.

Even before this episode had come to his attention, Pontchartrain had decided to withdraw Detroit from the Company's control. The suggestion of the directors, made in 1704, which would have reduced Detroit to a trading post along traditional lines could not seriously interest the minister who looked upon this settlement primarily as an imperial factor in North America. Even Denis Riverin, the company's Paris agent, thought that the only solution was to accede to Cadillac's request and grant him ownership of the post. Riverin, however, specified one basic restriction.

29. Cadillac au ministre, 19 novembre 1704, MPHC, vol. 33, pp. 228 - 229.

30. Ibid., p. 213, p. 214, pp. 216 - 217.

31. Ramezay au ministre, 14 novembre 1704, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, pp. 73v - 74.

32. Le ministre à la Mothe-Cadillac, 17 juin 1705, AC, B, vol. 27, p. 83.

The contract recently negotiated with Goy, Du Moulin and Mercier had reduced Canada's beaver shipments to 150,000 livres tournois annually. It was therefore important to restrict the amount of beaver which the company would be obliged to accept from Cadillac. Riverin thought that an equitable arrangement would consist in fixing this amount at 15,000 livres annually, the average value of the output of 1702 and 1703. Otherwise, Cadillac might capitalize on his strong position at Detroit and send as much as 40,000 to 50,000 livres of beaver annually to the colony:

Personne n'ignore que le poste du Détroit se trouve dans le centre des nations sauvages et qu'il peut communiquer par les lacs et par les rivières dans tous les pays des Outaouais. On ne pourra jamais rassurer la colonie sur la juste crainte qu'elle aura que celui qui en demeure propriétaire sera le maître de 33 faire seul tout le commerce des castors.

Riverin's suggestions went on to form the basic restrictions imposed on Cadillac when the minister granted him outright ownership of Detroit. The maximum amount of beaver he might send to the colony in any given year was fixed at 15,000 to 20,000 livres tournois and all his trading would have to be done at Detroit. Otherwise, his victory was complete. In the minister's own words, Cadillac became "le maître absolu de toutes choses en cet endroit"³⁴ and the governor and intendant were unequivocally told to grant him all the help and assistance he might require. Because Louis XIV considered Detroit "comme un moyen de conserver la possession

33. [D. Riverin] Réflexion sur l'état présent de l'établissement du Détroit en Canada, 29 avril 1704, AC, C 11 E, vol. 14, p. 166.

34. Le ministre à la Mothe-Cadillac, 14 juin 1704, AC, B, vol. 25, p. 146.

de l'Amérique Septentrionale et empêcher que les Anglois et autres nations ne pénétrèrent dans les terres" Vaudreuil and Raudot should accordingly give him all the soldiers he needed and co-operate in attracting the western Indians to his settlement.³⁵

The dispatches embodying Pontchartrain's decisions were delayed by the capture of la Seine in 1704 and it was only the following year that copies reached the interested parties. Cadillac, who had been in Quebec since the fall of 1704, was quick to notice that a great deal might be gained from the clauses ordering the governor and intendant to help him in every way. Despite the fact that Canada was at war and faced with a serious shortage of troops he asked for two hundred soldiers and for his selection of officers.³⁶ Vaudreuil, who could hardly spare even a single man, allowed him to take one hundred and fifty. Cadillac also procrastinated on the amount he owed to the Company of the Colony for the works it had carried out at Detroit until 1704 and for the merchandise it had left there.³⁷ Furthermore, he insisted that the court bear the cost of a surgeon, a chaplain, a missionary, two interpreters, the gifts for the Indians, medical supplies and such sundry items as buckets, plates, lamps, canvas and other odds and ends.³⁸ Since Cadillac had already been

35. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Beauharnois, 14 juin 1704, AC, B, vol. 25, pp. 132 - 132v bis.

36. Copie d'une lettre de la Mothe-Cadillac à Vaudreuil, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, pp. 274 - 274v; la Mothe-Cadillac à Vaudreuil, AC, C 11 A, vol. 24, pp. 266 - 269.

37. Traité fait avec la Compagnie de la Colonie de Canada et le sr. de la Mothe-Cadillac, 20 octobre 1705, AC, F 3, vol. 8, pp. 384 - 387v.

38. Copie d'une lettre de la Mothe-Cadillac à Vaudreuil, 31 mars 1706, AC, C 11 A, vol. 24, pp. 272 - 274v.

discharged of the annual poor tax of 6,000 livres which the Company had paid in return for the Detroit trade, Vaudreuil and the intendants thought he could well pay for these employees and items himself. Rather than do so, however, Cadillac threatened to leave the missionary, chaplain, surgeon and medical supplies behind. Finally, to put an end to the difficulties he was raising and force him to leave for his post, all his requests were granted.³⁹ Satisfied at last, Cadillac set out with his convoy in June 1706. The Raudots calculated that his delaying tactics had saved him as much as 19,000 livres on the amount the company paid when it operated Detroit.⁴⁰

The fact that all his demands had been satisfied, except for the one regarding the fifty soldiers, did not end Cadillac's complaints. The dispatches of 1704 had shown him to be in high favour at court and he apparently decided to tie himself still more closely to Pontchartrain by renewing his complaints the following year. He now stated that in order to forestall Vaudreuil and the Raudots who, together with Lotbinière and the Jesuits, were searching for ways and means of destroying his settlement, it would be necessary to cut off Detroit from Canada and endow it with a separate government.⁴¹ Fortunately, it was Champigny who was commenting the dispatches that year and he came out

39. Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 30 avril 1706, AC, C 11 A, vol. 24, pp. 12 - 16.

40. J. et A.D. Raudot au ministre, 2 novembre 1706, AC, C 11 A, vol. 24, p. 339.

41. la Mothe-Cadillac au ministre, [abst.] 20 octobre 1705, AC, C 11 A, vol. 23, p. 150.

strongly against this demand.⁴²

Perhaps as a result of the comments of the former intendant, Pontchartrain informed Cadillac that he would enjoy full liberty in all matters which regarded Detroit but would remain subordinated to Vaudreuil. Once his settlement was fully developed, however, "Sa Ma'té l'érigera volontiers en gouvernement." Until then, he could be assured of the King's protection and the minister's support.⁴³ For the time being, Cadillac had not succeeded in achieving the goal toward which all his efforts would increasingly tend. His fortunes, however, were still in the ascendant and had certainly eclipsed Vaudreuil's. The severe reprimand with which the governor was served reflects the strong impression Cadillac's complaints had made on Pontchartrain's mind:

Je vous écris ce mot en particulier pour vous dire que Sa Ma'té s'est aperçue par tout ce qui s'est passé en Canada sur l'affaire du Destroit que vous avez marqué de la passion contre cet établissement et contre le Sr. de Lamothe-Cadillac en particulier... Je dois vous dire qu'il est de vostre intérêt que cet établissement réussisse et que Sa Ma'té sera bien persuadée qu'il réussira quand vous le voudrez. Je serois fascher de porter des plaintes au Roy contre vous, mais je ne pourois me dispenser de le faire si vous ne changiez de conduite à cet esgard.⁴⁴

42. "Ce qui ruine les colonies angloises c'est parce qu'il y a plusieurs gouverneurs-généraux qui font chacun à leur fantaisie. Il ne faut dans un pays qu'un seul maitre." Commentaires de Champigny, Ibid., p. 151.

43. Le ministre à la Mothe-Cadillac, 9 juin 1706, AC, B, vol. 27, pp. 275v - 278v.

44. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 23 juin 1706, AC, B, vol. 27, pp. 286v - 287.

This stern warning was not the only one to reach Vaudreuil at this time. In these early years of his administration, the governor had committed a number of serious blunders. In 1704 and 1705, for instance, he had sent several deputies into the West to arbitrate Indian quarrels. To save the cost of equipping the canoes he negligently allowed three of these men, Vincennes, Mentheth and la Découverte, to take "quelques effets" with them.⁴⁵ In the colony, this immediately created the impression that the deputies were turning their missions to commercial ends. He had also farmed out his Ile aux Tourtes concession to an individual named St. Germain who proceeded to use it as a vantage point for the fur trade.⁴⁶ Ramezay quickly pounced on these errors and gave them due prominence in his dispatch to the minister.⁴⁷ The news left Pontchartrain disturbed. "Je vous avoue que tous ces avis me font une véritable peine," he told Vaudreuil.⁴⁸ The governor's position was further weakened in 1705 when more complaints of a similar nature poured into the offices of the ministry. The behaviour of the New England delegation which had arrived in Canada in August, 1705, and Vaudreuil's failure to take proper security measures on this occasion constituted one cause of grievance. Furthermore, a scarcity of salt during the winter of 1704 - 1705 had caused a riot in Montreal. Instead of punishing the ringleaders Vaudreuil simply reprimanded

45. Vaudreuil au ministre, 19 octobre 1705, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, p. 243.

46. Ibid., p. 244v.

47. Ramezay au ministre, 14 novembre 1704, Ibid., pp. 72 - 74v.

48. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 17 juin 1705, RAPQ 1938 - 1939, p. 70.

them, "ce qui a laissé" wrote Ramezay, "une mauvaise impression dans l'esprit du reste des séditieux."⁴⁹ Faced with so many instances of negligence, laxity, and weakness in the administration, Pontchartrain may have begun to wonder whether Vaudreuil was endowed with sufficient firmness to govern successfully. "Je vous diray sans façon," he threatened, "que si vous ne rendez votre commandement plus absolu dans l'exécution des ordres du Roy et plus sévère dans la punition des désobéissances je ne voudrois pas vous répondre que Sa Ma'té voulust vous laisser longtemps à la place où vous estes."⁵⁰ Vaudreuil was being menaced with nothing less than demotion from his post.

Although his position at the head of the colony was growing more and more precarious the governor had strong arguments of his own which enabled him to launch an effective counter-attack against Cadillac and his group. He pointed out to the minister that upon receiving his instructions in 1705 he had granted Cadillac all he had asked for and, generally speaking, done his utmost to facilitate his departure. Cadillac, however, had seized on every pretext to delay his voyage and the letters and requests Vaudreuil had received from him were but "une continuation de chicane". In asking that Detroit be independently governed Cadillac was hoping to break away from the jurisdiction of the governor and intendant in order to trade with the English, secure in the knowledge that no one could arrest or punish him. Indeed, trade and personal profit were Cadillac's only ambitions. He had

49. Ramezay au ministre, 12 octobre 1705, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, p. 331v.

50. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 9 juin 1706, AC, B, vol. 27, p. 223.

won Ramezay to him by giving him a stake in his settlement; he had completed arrangements with d'Iberville to ship beaver down the Mississippi; he had even gone as far as to offer Vaudreuil 500 to 600 pistoles in return for his agreement not to interfere with his commerce. If Cadillac succeeded in putting his plans to execution, Canada would be irreparably ruined.

Vaudreuil also pointed to his three year record as governor of the colony. During that period he had maintained peace and tranquillity. Yet a cabal led by Cadillac, Ramezay, and the d'Auteuil family, "liés par l'espérance d'un commerce futur au Détroit",⁵¹ claimed that he was weak, incapable of governing and the tool of a faction. Here, the governor was cleverly turning the tables on his enemies. They were the ones guilty of forming a faction and fomenting discord. He ended what was to prove a highly effective defense by asking Pontchartrain to order Cadillac to show him more respect and render him his due as Governor-General. "Il m'escrit, Monseigneur, comme s'il vouloit me faire⁵² mon procès."

While the governor was fighting for his political existence, the situation at Detroit was progressively deteriorating. It was proving most difficult to stop the Indians settled in that area

51. Vaudreuil et Beauharnois au ministre, 17 novembre 1704, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, p. 25v.

52. Vaudreuil au ministre, 30 octobre 1706, AC, C 11 A, vol. 24, pp. 211 - 213; Vaudreuil au ministre, [abst.] 28 avril, 30 octobre, 1 et 4 novembre 1706, Ibid., pp. 118 - 120; Ramezay admitted that "[Cadillac] avoit offert à M. Le Vasseur [the chief engineer] et à moy... un sixième dans l'établissement du Détroit. Nous avons mesme pris des engagements avec luy pour cela mais après de sérieuses réflexions je me suis désisté de cette affaire." Ramezay au ministre, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 25, p. 6.

from trading with the English whose cheaper goods were proving to be an irresistible attraction. To further complicate the situation, extremely bitter feelings were developing between the various tribes. The Ottawa chief, le Pesant, complained that the Miamis had attacked his people.⁵³ The Poutouatami, Ouilamek, had similar grievances.⁵⁴ The wily Huron chieftain, Quarante Sols, was intriguing with the Iroquois and plotting the destruction of the Ottawas. In 1706 the inevitable explosion occurred and the entire West almost burst into flames.

The incident which could have sparked off a general conflagration occurred as the result of Ottawa preparations for an expedition against the Sioux, their inveterate enemies. As a result of the insinuations of Quarante Sols, the Miamis decided that they were the ones whom the Ottawas intended to attack. In order to forestall the blow they decided to strike first but their plan was brought to the Ottawas' attention by a Poutouatami who had heard of it from his Miami wife. The Ottawas immediately met in council in order to decide upon a course of action. Two of the chiefs, Miscouaky and Jean Le Blanc, were opposed to any act of hostility, but the fire-eating le Pesant clamored for war. This bellicose policy found favour with the younger warriors and carried the day. The Ottawas fell upon the Miamis in their village and pursued them to the very doors of the French fort. A French soldier and a Récollet were caught in the *melée* and felled by the Ottawas. In the ensuing uproar the Miamis rallied and, with the

53. Parolles du Pesant à M. le Gouverneur-général, 24 août 1705, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, pp. 257 - 259.

54. Parolles de Ouilamek, chef Poutouatami, à M. le Gouverneur, Ibid., pp. 262v - 263.

help of the Hurons, besieged the Ottawas in their stockade. At the same time, a Huron delegation went to the Iroquois to ask for assistance and le Pesant fled to Michilimackinac.⁵⁵

As a matter of principle, Vaudreuil was generally opposed to any form of war with the Indian nations. Preserving peace in this instance was all the more important since the nation principally involved, the Ottawas, formed the backbone of the western alliance and were the most important of New France's middle-men. But because two Frenchmen had died Vaudreuil had become one of the injured parties and this made it necessary for the Ottawas to atone for their misdeed. Otherwise the French would suffer a serious loss of prestige among the other Indians. How to obtain satisfaction from the Ottawas without alienating them was the basic problem which Vaudreuil had to solve.⁵⁶ Since most of the blame for this affair lay with le Pesant, Vaudreuil was hoping he might convince his nation to deliver him to the French for punishment. But before beginning negotiations the governor wanted to be fully informed of Iroquois intentions. As previously shown,⁵⁷ he had refused to allow them to attack the Ottawas but

55. This incident is described in Parolles de Miscoouaky, frère de Jean Le Blanc, chef outaouais du Détroit descendu de Missilimackina, 26 septembre 1706, AC, C 11 A, vol. 24, pp. 243 - 250; see also d'Aigremont au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, pp. 46 - 52v.

56. "Le repos de cette colonie... demandant la tranquillité parmy les nations sauvages... j'ay cru qu'il estoit du bien du service du Roy de chercher les moyens d'accomoder cette affaire sans qu'il parust néanmoins que nous estions insensibles au coup que les Outaouais avoient fait." Vaudreuil au ministre, 24 juillet 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 26, pp. 55 - 55v.

57. See above pp. 82 - 83.

this was no guarantee they would remain at peace. Furthermore, the year was now so far advanced that it was impractical to undertake anything before 1707. Orders went out to all the interested tribes to remain at peace until then.⁵⁸

In June 1707, a contrite Ottawa delegation arrived in the colony, asking to be forgiven for what their nation had done. The governor judged that the moment was now favorable to ask for le Pesant, but the delegates pointed out in reply that this chief was connected with so many tribes that it might prove extremely difficult to bring him to the colony. Furthermore, these tribes would be sure to seek vengeance for any harm done to him. Rather than meet with a refusal or accept the offer of Jean Le Blanc who offered to suffer le Pesant's punishment, Vaudreuil prudently adopted another strategy. He ordered the Ottawas to return to Detroit and show their repentance by making a public submission to Cadillac. Le Pesant, however, was excluded from this reconciliation and, Vaudreuil went on to warn the Ottawas, should they ever again raise their hand against the French, he would not forgive them until the guilty ones had been delivered to him.⁵⁹ Such a method of arbitration was both cautious and effective. It would preserve peace, impress the other nations, transform le Pesant into an outcast among his own people and increase the prestige of Cadillac among the Indians. In fact Vaudreuil was hoping that Cadillac would take this as proof of his good intentions toward

58. Vaudreuil au ministre, 24 juillet 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 26, pp. 55v - 56.

59. Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 16 juillet 1707, Ibid., pp. 3 - 4.

him and his settlement.⁶⁰

Although Vaudreuil wrote to Cadillac, asking him to avoid all harshness in his dealings with the Ottawas,⁶¹ the commander of Detroit had other plans. He had decided to obtain le Pesant, in order to succeed where Vaudreuil had failed and thus prove himself superior to the governor. The younger Raudot, whose perceptive dispatches make him one of the most valuable commentators of the events of this period, also pointed out that Cadillac was hoping that le Pesant's numerous kinsmen and allies would follow him to Detroit, thus increasing the population and commerce of his post.⁶² After much deliberation the Ottawas agreed to kill le Pesant if he refused to return to Detroit with them.

It was not long after le Pesant's arrival that Cadillac realized the seriousness of his blunder. The Hurons and Miamis grew so enraged at the sight of the Ottawa chief that Cadillac was obliged to let him escape from the fort. When he returned a second time the fury of those two nations knew no bounds. They decided to wreck the settlement and kill all its occupants, both French and Ottawa. Fortunately, the plot was discovered before it could be put into execution but the Miamis subsequently vented their rage by killing three French settlers and a cow belonging to Cadillac. Indeed, the loss of the cow seems to have grieved Cadillac far more than that of the settlers, for he received

60. Vaudreuil au ministre, [abst.] 8 et 12 novembre 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, p. 111v.

61. Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 12 novembre 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 27, p. 232v.

62. A.D. Raudot au ministre, septembre 1709, AC, C 11 A, vol. 30, p. 236.

immediate compensation for the animal while agreeing to defer until a later date the arrest of the murderers. When the Miamis gave no sign of fulfilling their promise three weeks after that date had passed Cadillac reluctantly concluded that he had no alternative but to march against them. At the head of four hundred men he stumbled across the Miamis who had taken refuge in a crude stockade hastily thrown together with sticks and branches. Desultory firing now broke out on both sides while Cadillac, for fear of being wounded, was hiding behind a large tree. Vaudreuil expressed his absolute disgust with such a conduct: "Si le sr. de la Mothe eut voulu, il auroit emporté ce fort l'épée à la main, puisque soixante hommes, avec un bon sergent à leur teste, l'auroient fait." The battle, however, was short lived. The Miamis managed to extricate themselves from a troublesome situation by giving Cadillac three hostages and 1,000 écus of fur.⁶³

These successive outbursts which rocked Detroit from 1706 to 1708 constituted sufficient proof of the failure of Cadillac's Indian policy. It also confirmed a prediction made by Champigny in 1700, and often repeated since, that it was impossible for so many different tribes to live in close proximity and remain at peace. But, even before the failure of the experiment had become fully apparent, the process of disenchantment had set in at court. After reading the abstracts of Vaudreuil's dispatches of 1706 the minister realized that the latter was following instructions while Cadillac was creating difficulties.⁶⁴ Moreover,

63. Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 28, pp. 9v - 12.

64. Writing to Riverin in June 1707 the minister said of Vaudreuil: "J'ay des preuves qu'il donne à présent de bonne foy les mains à cet établissement," AC, B, vol. 29, pp. 14v - 15.

it had never been Pontchartrain's intention to pay the salaries of the Detroit personnel and shoulder the cost of the equipment as Cadillac had obliged Vaudreuil and Raudot to do before setting out in 1706. He accordingly informed him that these expenses were his responsibility and that the King would not contribute a single livre toward them.⁶⁵ The minister was especially disturbed by the complaints Vaudreuil had voiced against Cadillac's insubordination and arrogance. He may or may not have begun suspecting that Cadillac was complaining in order to discredit the governor and gain a free hand at Detroit. He certainly did understand, however, that by so greatly amplifying the powers of Cadillac he had badly undermined Vaudreuil's position and placed him in an impossible situation. Sternly, he informed the commander of Detroit that "si vous ne luy [Vaudreuil] rendiez pas à l'advenir tout ce qui luy est deu comme vostre supérieur, Sa Ma'té scauroit bien vous remettre dans vostre devoir."⁶⁶ So that Vaudreuil might know where he stood he was informed of the manner in which Cadillac had been written to.⁶⁷

Pontchartrain did not limit himself to using strong language. The first reports of the attack the Ottawas had carried out on the Miamis had arrived at court late in 1706 or early in 1707. According to Cadillac's version of the affair, the Ottawas had been incited to this action by his personal enemies. He complained of Joncaire who had prevented the Iroquois from lending him the

65. Le ministre à la Mothe-Cadillac, 13 juillet 1707, AC, B, vol. 29, pp. 127 - 128.

66. Le ministre à la Mothe-Cadillac, 30 juin 1707, Ibid., pp. 102v - 103.

67. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 30 juin 1707, Ibid., p. 57v.

assistance he had asked for to chastise the Ottawas. He accused Alphonse de Tonty, who had commanded at Detroit in his absence before being replaced by Bourgmont, of selling all the ammunition to the Indians in order to make French resistance impossible.⁶⁸ Vaudreuil, who knew that the most dangerous accusation being leveled at him concerned his alleged weakness, felt compelled to write at length to justify his peace policy. In order to clear the air once and for all, Pontchartrain appointed François Clairambault d'Aigremont, a former commissaire de la marine and now Raudot's secretary, to investigate the condition of the western posts in general and of Detroit in particular. The minister familiarized him with the nature of the accusations Vaudreuil and Cadillac had been hurling at each other and asked him to elucidate the truth by personal investigation and the questioning of disinterested witnesses. The importance of this mission was emphasized: "Sa Ma'té prendra sa dernière résolution sur ce qui regarde ces postes sur le rapport que vous en ferez."⁶⁹

The minister's changing temper, as reflected in his dispatches, should have convinced Cadillac of the necessity of adopting a more conciliatory course. Oddly enough, they had exactly the opposite effect. His actions grew so violent, his accusations so virulent and his vocabulary so extravagant that his general behavior almost seems indicative of mental derangement. He publicly insulted the Jesuits at the risk of discrediting them in

68. la Mothe-Cadillac au ministre, 30 août 1706, AC, C 11 A, vol. 24, pp. 192 - 192v; for Tonty's defense, see Tonty au ministre, 15 octobre 1706, Ibid., pp. 203v - 205.

69. Le ministre à d'Aigremont, 13 juillet 1707, AC, B, vol. 29, p. 126.

the eyes of the Indians.⁷⁰ Vaudreuil was well aware of the dangerous consequences this might have and he lodged a strong protest against such irresponsible behavior.⁷¹ Despite Pontchartrain's orders to show the governor more respect and deference, he affected greater independence than ever, pushing it to the point of omitting to submit reports on the condition of his post and refusing to execute Vaudreuil's orders.⁷² In his speeches to the Indians, he styled himself the Onontio of the West, although this could only tend to weaken the Governor General's prestige and make the Indians all the more difficult to deal with.⁷³ On one occasion, after reading a dispatch of Cadillac's Vaudreuil could not help commenting: "Je ne scay, Monseigneur, dans cet article, si c'est le sr. de la Mothe, capitaine des troupes et commandant au Détroit qui parle, ou un gouverneur-général des pays d'en Hault."⁷⁴

By now Pontchartrain had taken just about all he could stand, and such comments as "mauvais raisonnement", "mal et très mal" which appear more frequently in the margin of Cadillac's dispatches, point to his growing impatience. Indeed, the very violence

70. Parolles des Outaouais à M. de la Mothe, 24 septembre 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 26, p. 73v.

71. "Le mépris que le sr. de la Mothe fait de ces missionnaires ôte toute la confiance que les sauvages doivent avoir en eux" Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 15 novembre 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 25, p. 18v.

72. It was Cadillac himself who informed Pontchartrain of this. The minister commented: "C'est à luy à ménager M. de Vaudreuil... Sinon sera révoqué." la Mothe-Cadillac au ministre, [abst.] AC, C 11 A, vol. 27, pp. 145 - 145v.

73. Observations de Vaudreuil sur la lettre de M. de la Mothe du 1 octobre 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 26, p. 105.

74. Ibid., p. 104.

of the commander of Detroit was fast turning against him. When he pointed to the presence of 120 French dwellings and 1,200 Indians in his settlement as proof that it was strong enough for independence, the minister noted: "Attendre encore... et puisqu'il est si opposé à la subordination n'estant q' comm'dt. que seroit-il gouvern'r?"⁷⁵ In a scathing dispatch Pontchartrain informed Cadillac of his conviction that Vaudreuil and Raudot were executing the court's orders and honestly trying to co-operate with him. It was therefore up to Cadillac to adopt a more becoming conduct and see to it that all complaints against him ceased.⁷⁶ Then and there Cadillac probably realized that his strategy had been defeated. d'Aigremont's momentous report, submitted in November 1708, turned this defeat into a rout.

D'Aigremont's conclusions can be briefly summarized as a crushing indictment of Detroit as a menace to Canada and to French control of the West, and of Cadillac as a petty tyrant and profiteer. He began by pointing out that Detroit was far from being as solidly established as Cadillac would have the minister believe. There were but 63 French settlers and only 353 arpents were under cultivation, 157 of which belonged to Cadillac. Over this domain he exercised a tyrannical rule which had earned him the hatred of both the French and the Indians. The inhabitants were obliged

75. la Mothe-Cadillac au ministre, [abst.] 10 et 15 septembre et 1 octobre 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 27, p. 149v.

76. "Il me paroît par tout ce que [Vaudreuil et Raudot] m'écrivent qu'ils n'ont d'autre intention que d'exécuter les ordres positifs qu'ils ont reçu de faciliter votre établissement... C'est à vous à vous gouverner de manière avec luy [Vaudreuil] qu'il ne revienne plus de pareilles plaintes contre vous." Le ministre à la Mothe-Cadillac, 6 juin 1708, AC, B, vol. 29, pp. 362v - 363.

to pay him large sums for the right to work at their trade. A jug of brandy, which cost from 2 to 4 livres in Canada, sold for 20 at Detroit.⁷⁷ By 1708, various persons returning from Detroit had informed the governor and intendant of the character of Cadillac's rule. Vaudreuil and Raudot's accusations lent support to d'Aigremont's charges.⁷⁸

The most striking passages in this report, however, dealt with the effects of Detroit on French commerce and diplomacy. Cadillac, like everyone else, had known that his plans were prejudicial to the colony, for they had shifted the axis of the West dangerously close to the English and Iroquois settlements. With the beaver trade as depressed as it was, Detroit had rapidly come under the influence of the English and practically been transformed into a satellite gravitating in New York's economic orbit.⁷⁹ While Michilimackinac, shorn of its garrison and weakened by the migration of its Indians, had managed to send 40,000 livres of beaver to Canada, Detroit had only shipped 700 livres. The rest had gone to the English. And, d'Aigremont pointed out, the more Indians settled at Detroit, the greater would this trade with the English become. A no less important development was that Michilimackinac,

77. d'Aigremont au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, pp. 35v - 37v; the striking resemblance which exists between Champigny's report on Cadillac's conduct at Michilimackinac in the 1690's and d'Aigremont's report on his conduct at Detroit in the 1700's shows that Cadillac had simply continued in his old profiteering ways. See W.J. Eccles, Frontenac, the Courtier Governor, pp. 313 - 324.

78. Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 28, pp. 33 - 35.

79. "Le Détroit n'a que trop rapproché les sauvages des Anglois. Presque tout le castor qui s'y fait va à Orange et on en voit presque point icy de ce poste." A.D. Raudot au ministre, 25 octobre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 28, p. 290.

while in its prime, had served as a counterweight to the English Hudson's Bay Company. Detroit, on the other hand, was too far south to fulfill such a role. The weakening of Michilimackinac, which had been a consequence of the founding of Detroit, had therefore presented the English with an opportunity to extend their operations in the Northwest. The French were thereby forfeiting a territory where the best grades of beaver and menues pelleteries were to be found. Because of its more southerly latitude, those of Detroit were markedly inferior in quality.⁸⁰

D'Aigremont's report also pointed to some interesting changes in Iroquois policy. As explained in previous chapters, the main concern of the Five Nations during the early 18th century was to secure their western flank. They could not possibly hope to achieve this end as long as they continued to oppose the passage of the Western Indians to Albany. They had therefore allowed them to share in the New York trade, although indications are that Joncaire was trying to stem this movement,⁸¹ and were gradually winning the French allies to their side.⁸² The Hurons traded almost daily with the English and the Miamis followed their example.

80. D'Aigremont au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, pp. 45 - 46; pp. 60v - 61v.

81. Wraxall states that in May 1709 Joncaire "had desired the Senecas to kill and plunder the Farr Indians who may come to their country." Wraxall, p. 68. The documents edited by Wraxall record the presence of western Indians at Albany in July 1708, May and June 1709. See pp. 65, 66, 68.

82. Conferences appear to have been held between the Iroquois and the Western Indians as the latter journeyed through their country. On one occasion a group of western Indians were invited to settle among the Iroquois. "We shall then be able to withstand the governor of Canada or any other who may rise up against us." Wraxall, p. 74.

The latter had even concluded an alliance with the Iroquois.⁸³

To what extent this trade had weakened their ties with the French was demonstrated in 1711 when the western Indians met in Montreal. They had then experienced long moments of hesitancy before coming out against the English.

"Il résulte de tout ce qui a été dit cy devant, Monseigneur," concluded d'Aigremont, "que le détroit est un poste très à charge à la colonie du Canada et qui achèvera de la perdre entièrement si on continue de le soutenir." But would not the English move in and seize Detroit if the French withdrew? D'Aigremont did not think so. Although the Iroquois were no longer a barrier to the Western Indians, they could still effectively prevent English westward expansion.⁸⁴ D'Aigremont could not know that the day was not far off when the English would also be breaking through the territories of the Confederacy to plant a trading post on the shores of the Great Lakes. On that date the Iroquois barrier, the most important factor in the trading system of the 17th century, would be pierced in both directions and an era would have come to an end. But, in its place, a French barrier would emerge on the Lakes and a new and more bitter struggle would begin.

It was impossible for Cadillac's concept of Detroit to survive the devastating blow dealt to it by d'Aigremont's report. Cadillac,

83. "Les Hurons vont tous les jours par chez eux porter leur castor aux Anglois. Ils ont introduit les Miamis à ce commerce... leur ont fait faire une alliance très étroite avec les Iroquois par des colliers réciproques... Ceci fait voir que les Iroquois ont profité du temps qu'il y a que le Détroit est établi pour attirer nos alliés afin de les avoir pour eux en cas de guerre, ce qui arriveroit infailliblement." d'Aigremont au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, p. 45v.

84. Ibid., pp. 66 - 66v.

who had seen d'Aigremont and spoken to him during the latter's stay in his settlement, obviously suspected what was coming for he made an effort to defend himself. D'Aigremont, Cadillac claimed, had not spent sufficient time at Detroit to fully acquaint himself with the situation.⁸⁵ The various sums he requested from the settlers were necessary as compensation for the loss of revenue he had incurred by granting them half the commerce of the post. Nor did he forget to reiterate his demand for an independent Detroit and to repeat his old accusations against Vaudreuil, the Jesuits and the Canadian merchants:

Le grand projet des gens de Canada est d'establir Missilimackinac avec les congés et les coureurs de bois. C'est le grand attrait du gouverneur général qui le rend comme le maitre du commerce. Sans Missilimackinac l'abord des sauvages à Montréal ne subsistera pas ny par conséquent les présents que le gouverneur-général en retire.⁸⁶

A few years earlier, the mere mention of congés, coureurs de bois and of the governor profiting from the beaver trade would have caused indignant outbursts at court. Indeed it is largely fear of a recurrence of the old abuses which had made the Detroit episode possible. To what extent the climate had suddenly changed is indicated by the notation of the commentator: "Vray, mais nécc're."

In July 1709, d'Aigremont was advised that on the strength of his report the troops were being withdrawn from Detroit. Cadillac

85. Le ministre à d'Aigremont, 6 juillet 1709, AC, B, vol. 30, p. 170.

86. la Mothe-Cadillac au ministre, [abst.] 15 septembre 1708, AC, C 11 E, vol. 15, pp. 25 - 34v.

could remain there if he so decided but he was losing all the privileges he formerly enjoyed.⁸⁷ This arrangement, however, was only provisional because Pontchartrain could not bring himself to punish Cadillac too severely. To have done so after openly supporting him for so long would be equivalent to admitting his own mistake. Rather than share in the discomfiture of his former favorite he preferred packing him off to Louisiana as governor of that colony. La Forest, his former first lieutenant, replaced him as commanding officer of Detroit.

It is in Pontchartrain's instruction to la Forest that the full impact of d'Aigremont's report becomes evident. It was made clear to him that command of the post would confer no rank or title over and above the one of infantry captain which he already held. He was to report to Vaudreuil regularly and punctually execute his orders. Every effort was to be made to prevent trade with the English and the infiltration of their merchandise into his post. More important still he was expressly forbidden to use force in his dealings with the Indians. Those who wished to leave Detroit in order to return to their old villages were to be allowed to do so.⁸⁸ After nine years of semi-independent existence, Detroit was being transformed into an ordinary trading post subjected to Vaudreuil's full and immediate authority.

The failure of the Detroit experiment put an end to the most vexing problem which Vaudreuil was to encounter during his tenure as governor. Although relations with the Indian nations had

87. Le ministre à d'Aigremont, 6 juillet 1709, AC, B, vol. 30, p. 170.

88. Le ministre à la Forest, 13 mai 1710, AC, B, vol. 32, pp. 347v - 351.

always been the special responsibility of the governors-general of New France, the West was largely withdrawn from his jurisdiction as long as Cadillac was in favor at court. Vaudreuil had no choice but to watch almost helplessly while an experiment which was not of his own making and over which he had no control threatened to wreck beyond repair French commerce and diplomacy in the West. One can well wonder how the Western Indians would have reacted had the Iroquois actually gone to war during this period. Vaudreuil would probably have discovered what he no doubt suspected, that in threatening the Five Nations with the blows of the western Indians, he was brandishing an empty pistol.

It will always be difficult to explain why Cadillac was permitted to launch his programme and, once it was launched, pursue it in the teeth of vigorous opposition. It would seem, however, that Cadillac possessed unusual powers of persuasion. Certainly his early memoirs are the work of an extremely intelligent and perceptive mind. He was no doubt allowed to pursue it because, for a long time, the minister was convinced that Vaudreuil was protesting for personal and factional reasons.⁸⁹ This is not so much a proof of Pontchartrain's stupidity as of the existence of an organized opposition, working in close collaboration against

89. The following passage is extremely important. Pontchartrain is here explaining to Vaudreuil his reasons for supporting Cadillac: "Je veux bien croire que vous n'avez que de bonnes intentions, mais on prétend que vous n'êtes pas toujours le maistre de vos décisions et que quelques gens, par des veues particulières vous ont un peu altéré contre led. sr. de la Mothe." Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 30 juin 1707, AC, B, vol. 29, p. 58.

the governor.⁹⁰ Once the minister saw though this game he made an immediate effort to put Cadillac in his place and ordered the situation investigated. After seeing the results of this investigation he finally awakened to the fact that the Detroit experiment, in which he had placed so much hope, had never been anything but a dubious scheme conceived by an adventurer in search of personal enrichment.

90. Even Denis Riverin had been won to it by 1707. Chefs concernant le Canada pour l'année 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 27, pp. 129v - 130.

CHAPTER VIII

The Failure of the Restrictive System

During the first quarter of the eighteenth century in New France three groups, each one favouring a different system for the West, were involved in a struggle for control of the region of the Great Lakes. With the elimination of Cadillac in 1709 the field was narrowed down to two. The first of these groups, led by Vaudreuil and most of the other civil administrators, demanded the immediate revival of the congés and the reoccupation of the posts. The other, made up of the Jesuits, opposed this system which had led to grave abuses in the past and favoured a policy which would minimize the possibility of future disorder. Pontchartrain himself tended to sympathize with the point of view of the Jesuits, and this on economic as well as on moral grounds. To lift the restrictions as long as the beaver glut endured, for instance, could only worsen already critical market conditions.¹ Furthermore, no less than the Jesuits, the humanitarian minister remembered all too well that the congés had been a source of grievous abuse in the past and he was determined to prevent such a situation from developing under Vaudreuil. It will be noted at this point that while Vaudreuil favoured the congés for political

1. In replying to Callières, who had asked that the congés be revived in 1702, Pontchartrain pointed out that what he proposed was impractical in view of the large quantity of unsold pelts accumulated in France. *Mémoire du Roy à Callières et Beauharnois*, 20 juin 1703, AC, B, vol. 23, p. 199v.

reasons, the Jesuits opposed them on moral grounds and Pontchartrain largely on economic ones. This peculiar alignment of forces made the problem all the more difficult to solve.

While this conflict of policies and interests was taking place in the offices of the ministry of the marine, the course of events in the West showed clearly that only Vaudreuil's program could provide a permanent solution to the problems existing in those regions. As a result of inadequate French representation in the area of the Great Lakes, relations between Canada's Indian allies steadily deteriorated until 1712 when a full scale conflict, the Fox War, broke out. This event is a milestone in the history of New France. It resulted in the reoccupation of Michilimackinac, a move which constituted a first step away from the restrictions toward a new expansionism. In this chapter the attitude of Vaudreuil, the Jesuits, and the minister on the question of the posts and the congés will be examined in relation to events in the West between 1709 and 1713.

By 1709, it had become painfully evident that the French were well on the way to losing the commerce and alliance of the Western tribes. Through Detroit and also from their trading posts on Hudson Bay the English were bringing enormous pressure to bear on the West and undermining what remained of French influence in those regions. D'Aigremont had dealt extensively with this situation in his report of 1708. He had estimated at 100,000 écus the annual value of the various types of pelts being drained toward Hudson Bay. Most of this fur, he stated, was controlled by the Crees and Gens des Terres who disliked the Ottawas and would deal only with the French. Since the latter no longer went among them

they now dealt with the Hudson Bay Company.² Although the French had retained most of this bay under the terms of the treaty of Ryswick the positions occupied by the English Company on James Bay, then referred to as the Bottom of the Bay, were extremely strategic. From this vantage point they attracted not only the Crees and Gens des Terres but also the Temiscamingues and Abitibis who had previously dealt with the now defunct Compagnie du Nord. In 1709, Vaudreuil had attempted to solve the problem of English competition in those quarters by sending ninety men under Mentheth to attack the Company installations, which were said to be in a poor state of defense. After an arduous journey of three months Mentheth and his party attempted to storm the British fort only to meet with a bloody repulse which cost the lives of the commander and twenty-six of his men.³

To place the French in a better competitive position both politically and economically, d'Aigremont, for his part, had suggested that New France reconstruct its western hinterland by withdrawing from Detroit and reoccupying Michilimackinac. These were the two principal recommendations of his report. Michilimackinac, he stated, "est le plus considérable de tous les postes avancez du Canada, tant par rapport à sa situation avantageuse... que par le commerce qu'on peut y faire." Situated at the crossroads of the Great Lakes system, it served as a place of rendez-vous for all the Lake tribes. Furthermore, since the post was accessible only

2. d'Aigremont au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, p. 70.

3. J. Raudot au ministre, 20 septembre 1709, AC, C 11 A, vol. 30, pp. 220 - 222; Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 octobre 1710, AC, C 11 A, vol. 31, pp. 7v - 9v.

to canoemen, it could provide all those tribes with a refuge in case of war with the nations situated farther south. Many of the latter, and notably the Fox, were unfamiliar with the canoe. In order to attract the Indians to Michilimackinac it was necessary to staff the post with an officer and thirty men and to strengthen it economically by issuing twelve congés annually.⁴ Briefly, d'Aigremont wished to turn the expansionist energies of New France away from the Southwest, where Detroit had been directing them, to a more northerly course.

Whether these recommendations would be implemented depended entirely on Pontchartrain. Ever since assuming the direction of the affairs of the marine, this minister had been hostile to expansionism and shown himself determined to prevent a recurrence of the abuses that had marred the Frontenac era. Beginning in 1702, a series of edicts had been promulgated for the purpose of completely abolishing the brandy trade.⁵ On one occasion Vaudreuil was told that when he had orders and instructions to send into the West he should have them carried by missionaries and supply convoys rather than by deputies who too frequently turned diplomatic missions to commercial ends.⁶ Most of Pontchartrain's hopes for the West, however, rested with Detroit and the failure

4. d'Aigremont au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, pp. 68 - 68v.

5. Défense de vendre de l'eau de vie aux sauvages pour une durée de deux ans, 1702, AC, B, vol. 23, pp. 95v - 96; Ordonnance du Roy qui fait deffenses ... de faire boire de l'eau de vie aux sauvages, 30 juin 1707, AC, F 3, vol. 9, p. 68; Ordonnance de M. Raudot qui ... renouvelle les défenses de vendre aux sauvages de l'eau de vie, 5 septembre 1708, AC, F 3, vol. 9, p. 128; Ordonnance du Roy qui deffend le commerce de l'eau de vie avec les sauvages, 6 juillet 1709, AC, F 3, vol. 9, pp. 144 - 145.

6. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Raudot, 9 juin 1706, AC, B, vol. 27, p. 207.

of this establishment left him shocked, dismayed, and without an alternate policy. Although it should have been evident that only the reoccupation of the West by means of posts and congés could keep the English from making further gains in those regions, Pontchartrain remained uncertain and lethargic. He did agree to the necessity of sending a commanding officer to Michilimackinac and he asked the colonial administrators to suggest a suitable candidate for the post.⁷ But nothing was said about the garrison, although French authority could hardly be effectively exercised without one. His dilemma was particularly evident on the question of the congés. Referring to the abuses they had formerly caused, he informed d'Aigremont that "nous en devons toujours craindre les mêmes inconvénients quelques mesures que nous prenions pour les prévenir."⁸ With Pontchartrain still refusing to sanction expansionism despite the state of emergency existing in the West it must finally have become obvious to all concerned that nothing but a change in the moral climate or in economic conditions could bring him to reconsider his position. At this moment, it suddenly appeared possible that the perennial problem of contraband might force the minister to re-examine the problem of the congés.

By 1709, after underwriting the Canadian beaver trade for three years, Aubert, Néret, and Gayot were practically ruined and obliged to suspend temporarily their operations. The task of liquidating the enormous debt of the Company of the Colony had left them financially exhausted. Furthermore, on account of the growth of

7. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Raudot, 6 juillet 1709, AC, B, vol. 30, p.153.

8. Le ministre à d'Aigremont, 6 juillet 1709, Ibid., p. 172.

the illicit trade between Montreal and Albany, it apparently was proving very difficult for them to obtain a sufficient supply of dry beaver pelts to maintain their sales at a satisfactory level. Fortunately for Canada, du Moulin and Mercier, "bons et riches négociants," came forward and agreed to receive the beaver and pay the bills of exchange. But here again the problem arose of assuring them a minimum quantity of 50,000 or 60,000 livres weight of dry pelts annually. In 1708, in an effort to stem contraband, Pontchartrain had suggested a war on New York and only the opposition of the governor and intendant had kept this proposition from being put into effect. In 1709, the minister tossed in another direction. In order to increase the volume of dry pelts he began thinking in terms of reviving the congés and asked Vaudreuil and the Raudots to submit a memoir on the subject.⁹

The governor and intendant were quick to grasp the implications of this demand. With Cadillac discredited and the beaver trade seemingly on the upswing, the entire question of the West was placed in a new perspective. In an effort to strengthen Canada's control over these regions, they wrote strongly in favor of the congés. With some exaggeration they stated that it might prove extremely difficult to obtain the required quantity of dry pelts without these trading permits.¹⁰ Harping on the political

9. "[Le roi] espère que sans mettre ces moyens the congés en usage on pourra avoir les cinquante à soixante milliers qu'il nous en faut nécessairement tous les ans... le roi désire cependant qu'ils examinent cette proposition des congés... et qu'ils lui fassent savoir leur avis." Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Raudot, 6 juillet 1709, AC, B, vol. 30, p. 157.

10. Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 14 novembre 1709, AC, C 11 A, vol. 30, p. 13v.

theme the younger Raudot declared that if the French did not take merchandise into the West, the Ottawas would conclude an alliance with the Iroquois in order to gain access to the Albany market.¹¹ This question was apparently closely linked with Madame de Vaudreuil's hasty departure for France in the fall of 1709. One of her memoirs to Pontchartrain,¹² which reflects her husband's careful coaching, indicates that one of her principal tasks was to help ram the congés through. These concerted efforts might well have succeeded had not the Jesuits been campaigning with equal determination against reviving these trading permits.

Jesuit opposition on this issue largely stemmed from the abuses which had been associated with the workings of the system until its abolition in 1696. In 1702, for instance, Father Carheil had opposed the revival of the congés, the reoccupation of the posts and suggested that the existing ones¹³ be abandoned. After having withdrawn from the West in this manner Canada would revert to the status of a pact colony and grow prosperous on the labor of its concentrated population. Champigny was then returning to France and he apparently told the missionary that he might suggest a compromise solution to the minister. This would call for the restoration of the congés to be accompanied by the abolition of all the posts. From the vantage point of their missions the

11. A.D. Raudot au ministre, septembre 1709, AC, C 11 A, vol. 30, p. 240v.

12. Madame de Vaudreuil au ministre, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 30, p. 425.

13. Carheil mentions three posts in his dispatch, Detroit, les Sioux, and les Illinois, the last two negligible both in size and influence. Although Frontenac had established several others, notably at Chacouamigon, Kaministigoya and on Lake Nipigon, they may well have been abandoned by the time this dispatch was written.

Jesuits would then be in a position to exercise some control on the coureurs and, if necessary, report their misdeeds to the colonial administrators. This tentative solution which, if implemented, would have divided the control of the West between the civil and the religious estate, was rejected by Carheil: "Je connois trop la jeunesse du Canada à qui les congés seroient accordés pour pouvoir consentir à leur rétablissement."¹⁴

Carheil's basic ideas recur in the memoir submitted by the Paris procurator of the Jesuit missions, Father Lamberville, in April 1710. Coming at a time when Fontchartrain was considering the restoration of the congés, the arguments brought forward by the Jesuit outweighed those of Vaudreuil, his wife, and the Raudots and nullified any possibility of the system being revived. He contended that these permits would not increase French commerce. On the contrary, the transportation of goods over long distances would raise their price and make the Indians all the more eager to trade with the English. Roaming the woods also involved the French in the quarrels of the Indians and brought war on the colony. It would be much preferable to follow the example of the English who managed to avoid this inconvenience by refusing to mingle with the savages. To favor the congés, Lamberville stated emphatically: "c'est vouloir donner encore occasion à une infinité de maux causés par la liberté de se jeter dans les bois, même sans

14. Although the name of Carheil's correspondent does not appear on the dispatch, the fact that it was intended for a high ranking colonial administrator about to leave for France clearly points to Champigny. It is extremely interesting as an example of the manoeuvres that must have constantly been going on behind the scenes. AN, M, carton 204, dossier 4, printed in JRAD, vol. 65, p. 188 passim.

permission du commandant, et de nouveau attirer les guerres qui par le passé ont désolé la colonie."¹⁵ The strong impression this report made on Pontchartrain is sufficiently attested by a comment in his handwriting which appears on the abstract: "Ne rien changer à la décision. Expliquer."

The Jesuit's memoir, therefore, was the decisive factor which played against the congés. To make the blow to Canada still more severe a recent inventory of the Beaver Company stores had disclosed that an unexpectedly large supply of greasy pelts was still on hand. Du Moulin and Mercier decided that there was no possibility of this babklog being exhausted by 1712 as Aubert, Néret and Gayot had thought in 1706. Pontchartrain therefore allowed them to prolong the interdict on this type of skin until 1718, the year of expiry of the contract.¹⁶ As a measure of compensation the price of dry beaver was raised from 30 to 34 sols per livre weight, but the benefit of this increase was largely nullified since it was to serve to finance payment of arrears on Riverin's salary which had gone unpaid since 1706.

A growing clamor for the direct importation of stroud from England to Canada shows how desperate the colony had become on the issue of the beaver trade. The conviction was growing that this was the only measure which could prevent the bulk of Canadian beaver from ending up in Albany. Although it was obvious that

15. Lamberville au ministre, [abst.] 15 avril 1710, AC, C 11 A, vol. 30, pp. 463 - 465v.

16. Le ministre à J. Raudot, 23 mai 1710, AC, B, vol. 32, pp. 107v - 109.

French stroud could not compete with the English make¹⁷ Pontchartrain refused the permission which, if granted, would ruin the French manufactures specializing in this ware.¹⁸ This decision, joined to the refusal to revive the congés and the exclusion of greasy beaver for an extended term of six years, created widespread fear and discontent. It was small consolation to learn that the beaver trade would be placed on the same basis as that of the menues pelleteries in 1718 when, it was thought, the supply of unsold pelts would be exhausted.¹⁹ The Indians were under the impression that restrictions on greasy beaver were to be lifted by 1712, and they were preparing to resume their trade in this commodity. As for Vaudreuil, he had been hoping that through the congés he might rally the Indians and stem their trade with New York and Hudson Bay. The minister's negative attitude left him helpless before the process. Indeed, the growth of Iroquois boldness between 1709 and 1711 was probably based on a spreading belief that, despite Vaudreuil's threats, the western alliance was disintegrating.

Father Lamberville's memoir had been passed on to Vaudreuil and the Raudots for criticism and the three administrators made an attempt to overcome the objections he had raised. They pointed

17. According to Bégon, a piece of French stroud, 17 to 18 aunes in length (1 aune 3'7") cost the Indians 106 livres weight of dry beaver. An English stroud of similar size retailed for 52 livres weight. Mémoire de M. Bégon au sujet du commerce des escarlatines, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 30, pp. 485 - 485v.

18. Le ministre à J. et A.D. Raudot, 7 juillet 1711, AC, B, vol. 33, p. 342; Le ministre à d'Aigremont, 20 juin 1712, AC, B, vol. 34, p. 322v.

19. Le ministre à J. Raudot, 23 mai 1710, AC, B, vol. 32, p. 108v. Mémoire du Roy au sr. de Vaudreuil, 7 juillet 1711, AC, B, vol. 33, p. 301.

out that it was not the congés but price-fixing which lay at the root of the abuses of the latter seventeenth century. Should the congés be issued for Michilimackinac only, the commander of the post could exercise a close control over the activities of the coureurs. Operating under such close supervision the system would prove a boon to the colony. To state that the congés raised the price of trade goods and drove the Indians into the arms of the English was inaccurate. Taking merchandise to the Indians spared them a long trip to the English settlements and was therefore an efficient way of offsetting the lure of cheaper goods. Vaudreuil and the intendants conceded that the English were satisfied to remain aloof from the Indians as long as they enjoyed the friendship of the Five Nations. The French, on the other hand, mingled with them, arbitrated their quarrels and made them live at peace. Were it not for their constant interference in Indian affairs, the nations would be continuously fighting and the missionaries would be driven from the West. They ended by emphasizing the catastrophic effects of the restrictive system on Indian diplomacy.²⁰ Vaudreuil was to return to this last point after witnessing the meeting of the allies in Montreal in 1711: "Si on n'y prend garde," he then wrote, "les Anglois seront plus maitres de ces nations que nous-mêmes."²¹

Despite these arguments and warnings, Pontchartrain was adamant. Borrowing an argument from Lamberville he informed the

20. Mémoire présenté à Mgr. de Pontchartrain contre les congés et Réponces des srs. de Vaudreuil et Raudot aud. mémoire, s.d., AC, C 11 G, vol. 6, pp. 80 - 89v.

21. Vaudreuil au ministre, 8 novembre 1711, AC, C 11 A, vol. 32, p. 72.

governor and intendant that as long as war lasted it would be necessary to concentrate every able-bodied man in the colony in order to resist a possible English onslaught. After the conclusion of peace, the whole question would come up for re-examination.²²

Peace, however, would not bring an immediate solution. By 1713 it had practically been decided to abolish the beaver monopoly as soon as the contract with Aubert, Néret and Gayot reached its appointed term and to allow the Canadian merchants to ship their beaver directly to France. Suspension of the congés was necessary until then. Otherwise, the new system might be faced with a backlog of unsold pelts at the very outset.²³ The repugnance felt by Pontchartrain for a system which had caused so much disorder in the past also contributed to shaping his attitude on the question. Because of the debauchery formerly associated with the coureurs de bois, Vaudreuil was told, Louis XIV had decided not to revive the congés until he had received the positive assurance that even the possibility of abuse had permanently been stamped out.²⁴ As for the brandy trade, "ce commerce est si pernicieux que Sa Ma'té n'a rien plus à coeur que de le détruire et Elle ne peut trop leur recommander de donner une vive et continuelle application à l'empescher."²⁵ The early 18th century in New France was not simply a period of economic depression. It also witnessed an intense effort at what might best

22. Le ministre à d'Aigremont, 20 juin 1712, AC, B, vol. 34, p. 323.

23. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 25 juin 1713, AC, B, vol. 35, pp. 275 - 275v.

24. Ibid., pp. 275 - 275v.

25. Ibid., p. 276.

be described as moral reconstruction. Only after 1713 would Pontchartrain finally awaken to the fact that the stakes in North American colonization transcended moral and economic categories.

While the Jesuits, Aubert, Néret and Gayot, Du Moulin and Mercier, Vaudreuil and the intendants were pleading their case before a bewildered and unhappy Pontchartrain, who obviously was incapable of reconciling the conflicting points of view of these various pressure groups, storm warnings were beginning to appear in the West. Vaudreuil and the Raudots had repeatedly pointed out that it was necessary for the French to circulate among the allies and arbitrate their quarrels. Otherwise, these Indians would be constantly fighting each other and transforming their territories into a perpetual battleground. With French influence in the West at its lowest ebb, the situation there was gradually drifting out of control. By 1710 skirmishes between the tribes and other acts of violence are mentioned more frequently in the letters of the missionaries to Vaudreuil and in those of the governor addressed to Pontchartrain. Then in 1712, not unexpectedly, the entire West came ablaze.

Although it is impossible to give an exact reconstruction of the alignment of tribes on the eve of the Fox war it would be safe to say that four loose alliances had formed by that date. Easily the most disturbing development was the emergence of a southwestern grouping on the lands between Lake Michigan and the Upper Mississippi. It included five tribes - the Fox, Maskoutins, Sakis, Puants or Winnebagoes, and Kikapous - with a minimum fighting

force of nine hundred men.²⁶ Although the Fox were detested by most of the other tribes, Cadillac had asked them to relocate to his settlement and in 1709 a sizeable group had accepted his invitation and moved to Detroit. According to Vaudreuil, they had only done so to be closer to the English and the Iroquois.²⁷ Soon after their arrival they had concluded an alliance with the confederacy,²⁸ probably for the purpose of winning a right of way to Albany, and for a time the governor feared that they might settle among the Five Nations. Strengthened by this group of Fox, the Iroquois would have become a fearful force indeed.

As a counterweight to the southwestern Indians it would have been necessary to oppose the united strength of the northwestern tribes. But the restrictive system and the foundation of Detroit had left them badly disorganized. The Saulteurs and Mississagués, who were settled in the vicinity of Lake Superior, feuded bitterly with the Fox, the Sakis and the Poutouatamis. These Poutouatamis were fairly close to the Ottawas, of related stock, and together these two tribes can be taken as a third group. Their poor relations with the Saulteurs were only matched by equally poor ones with the Hurons and Miamis, many of whom were settled at Detroit. This fourth group, in turn, feuded with the southwestern tribes. Finally, at the southern extremity of lake Michigan, dwelt the

26. This is the figure arrived at by Sabrevois in 1718. *Mémoire sur les sauvages du Canada*, s.d., NYCD, vol. 9, pp. 885 - 892. Writing in 1710, A.D. Raudot estimated their strength at 750, but this seems far too conservative. C. Rochemonteix ed. *Relations par lettres de l'Amérique Septentrionale* (Paris, 1904) pp. 132 - 133.

27. Vaudreuil au ministre, 8 novembre 1711, AC, C 11 A, vol. 32, pp. 72v - 73.

28. Vaudreuil au ministre, 6 novembre 1712, AC, C 11 A, vol. 33, p. 54v.

Illinois. This populous nation²⁹ had certain ties with the Ottawa-Poutouatami alignment and fought fiercely with the Fox and the Ouyatanon Miamis who lived on the Wabash.

Vaudreuil was well aware of the explosive possibilities inherent in such a situation. In the negotiations with the western Indians which were held during the summer of 1711 he exhorted the various tribes to live at peace with one another. Without cong  holders to carry his orders into the West he asked the Ottawas, the most faithful of the French allies, to impose a settlement on the Saulteurs and Sakis whose quarrel interfered with hunting in the Lake Superior area. In a long speech to the Fox he told them of being fully informed of their insolent behaviour at Detroit, where they had recently killed two Miamis. In the interest of peace they would be well advised to leave Detroit and return to their village near Green Bay.³⁰

The war began like any one of the innumerable feuds that had been troubling the West since the end of the seventeenth century. For some time the Maskoutins had been amusing themselves at the expense of Saquima, an Ottawa chief, by calling him a coward. These taunts had goaded Saquima to fury. After the Montreal meetings he visited the Poutouatamis and invited their chief, Makisab , to join forces with him for an attack on the Maskoutins. Makisab , who was himself contemplating an expedition against the Fox, readily accepted the proposition. Visiting with the Poutouatamis at that time were a group of Illinois. As soon as they heard of the

29. A.D. Raudot claimed they had 1,500 warriors. Relations par lettres de l'Am rique Septentrionale, p. 136.

30. Parolles de M. le Gouverneur-g n ral aux sauvages descendus d'en Haut, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 31, pp. 81v - 87.

plans they rushed off to invite their nation to participate in the attack.³¹

The Poutouatamis and Ottawas, one hundred and fifty strong, fell on the Maskoutins near the St. Joseph river. Fighting broke off after lasting three days and causing fairly heavy casualties, especially among the Maskoutins. As the Poutouatamis and Ottawas were heading for home, they met the Illinois who had hurried back and were spoiling for a fight. The three nations were not slow in deciding to resume hostilities and they set off on the trail of the Maskoutins who were heading for Detroit.³²

Meantime, at that post, the Fox were growing progressively more insolent. Dubuisson, commanding in the absence of la Forest, attributed their attitude to the English who were said to be encouraging them to destroy the settlement. To protect himself against these designs he sent out runners to recall the Detroit Indians from their winter hunting expeditions and to ask for the help of the Saulteurs and Mississagués. By the middle of May, 1712, a crisis was fast developing. The Maskoutins had arrived at Detroit and told the Fox of the attack which they had suffered. Hot on their heels were Makisabé and six hundred warriors who immediately enlisted the support of the Hurons. Dubuisson's actions at this stage are uncertain. Father Marest claims that he obliged the Indians to attack the Fox.³³ The commander, for his part, states that he attempted to avert the conflict by asking Makisabé to order

31. Parolles de Makisabé, chef Poutouatami, 17 août 1712, AC, C 11 A, vol. 33, pp. 87 - 90v.

32. Loc. cit.

33. Lettre du R.P. Joseph Marest, missionnaire à Missilimackinac, à M. de Vaudreuil, 21 juin 1712, AC, C 11 A, vol. 33, p. 73v.

the Fox and Maskoutins away from Detroit. By then, however, events had snowballed beyond control.³⁴ This became even more evident when a second contingent of Illinois arrived on the scene with bands of Osages, Missouris, and other warriors from still more remote tribes. With a major battle now inevitable, the French barricaded themselves in their fort after distributing ammunition to the allies and braced themselves for the shock.

The fighting lasted nineteen days. The Maskoutins and Fox, who had taken refuge in the latter's stockade with their women and children, soon ran short of food and water. Alternately they asked for quarter, shouted defiance at the attackers, and mocked the French by lining the outside of the palisade with English stroud. The allies themselves appeared several times tempted to abandon the siege and head for home. But Dubuisson, who realized that this battle now had to be pushed through to its conclusion, prevailed on them to continue with the fighting. On the nineteenth day, under cover of rain and darkness, the Fox and Maskoutins managed to escape from the stockade and dug themselves in on a nearby island. Relentlessly, the allies pursued them, besieged them for another four days, and forced them to surrender. Most of the prisoners, men, women and children, were dealt with in customary Indian fashion. Dubuisson set down at one thousand the total losses sustained by the two unfortunate nations;

34. "Les Hurons estoient trop animez et celle grande affaire avoit esté trop bien concertée pendant tout l'automne et l'hiver et les présents donnés." Dubuisson au ministre, 1712, AC, C 11 A, vol. 33, p. 164. The account of the battle which follows is based on Dubuisson's narrative, the only surviving eye-witness account.

Vaudreuil estimated them at seven hundred, a likelier figure.³⁵

The Fox war showed quite clearly how necessary it was for the French to be strongly represented in the West. Had congé holders been patrolling those territories in the fall and winter of 1711 they almost certainly would have heard of the plans being drawn up by the Ottawas and their allies and could then have taken measures to prevent their execution. But because no one was there to thwart these designs, the injured pride of a solitary Ottawa had unleashed a major war.³⁶

As soon as Vaudreuil heard of these events he left for Montreal, which was a more convenient location than Quebec for receiving reports from the West and issuing orders. In a letter written from Michilimackinac, Father Marest had pointed out to him that, despite their heavy losses, the Fox nation was not destroyed. Many of their warriors were still to be found in the vicinity of Green Bay. Joined to their allies, the Kikapous, Sakis and Puants, the last two, tribes of skilled canoemen, they were a threat to the entire West. "S'ils se joignoient ensemble... ils pourroient bien encore jeter la terreur partout ici haut" wrote Marest, "...ce sont des gens sans raison, sans pitié."³⁷

Shortly after Vaudreuil's arrival in Montreal deputies from the Ottawas, Poutouatamis and Sakis arrived in the city. The

35. Vaudreuil au ministre, 23 juillet 1712, Ibid., p. 43.

36. This is what emerges from Makisabé's account of the origins of the war. In 1715, Louvigny would repeat: "Tous les sauvages font consister l'honneur dans leur caprice. Cette guerre des Renards en est une preuve puisque c'est un particulier nommé Saquima qui l'a entreprise." Louvigny au ministre, 3 octobre 1715, AC, C 11 A, vol. 35, p. 222.

37. Lettre du R.P. Joseph Marest, missionnaire à Missilimackina à M. de Vaudreuil, 21 juin 1712, AC, C 11 A, vol. 33, pp. 74 - 74v.

Ottawa delegate asked for the governor's permission to continue the war, a course of action which was opposed by the Poutouatami, Ouilamek. With Marest's warning fresh in his mind Vaudreuil pointed out that what the Ottawa proposed was fraught with danger since it would almost certainly embroil the allies with several other tribes. It would be much preferable to induce the Fox to withdraw from their territories, and he asked Ouilamek and Mouet, the Saki, to exercise their considerable influence to bring this about.³⁸ Until Louvigny's arrival at Michilimackinac³⁹ a suspension of hostilities was essential.

Before the battle of Detroit, the reoccupation of Michilimackinac had been necessary to keep the western Indians in the French interest and prevent the drainage of beaver toward Hudson Bay. After the battle the occupation of the post by a commanding officer and garrison became still more urgent politically. After being momentarily thrown together by a common hatred for the Fox, the northwestern tribes might very well drift apart once more. In fact, this process already seemed to have begun. The Poutouatamis had retired among the Illinois. The Saulteurs and Mississagués migrated to Topicaniche. Saquima, however, with most of the Detroit Ottawas, had retreated to Michilimackinac.⁴⁰ Only a French officer and garrison could hold them there and attract the other

38. Parolles du Gouverneur en réponse à celles de Kotawiliboé, Wila-mek et Mouet, 28 juillet 1712, Ibid., pp. 81 - 83v; Vaudreuil au ministre, 6 novembre 1712, Ibid., pp. 52 - 53.

39. Marest stated that "si les sauvages ont jamais désiré M. Louvigny c'est maintenant, et ils disent qu'il est absolument nécessaire qu'il vienne." Ibid., p. 74v.

40. Dubuisson au ministre, 1712, Ibid., p. 177v.

allied tribes to that location.⁴¹ Joined to the French, these Indians would form a sizeable group, capable of resisting the onslaught of their enemies. But should they scatter again, Vaudreuil feared that the chance of reunion would be lost forever.⁴² The Fox and their allies might destroy them at leisure, tribe by tribe, and emerge as the masters of the West.

The danger facing the French allies in 1712 was compounded by the attitude of the Iroquois. Several of the surviving Fox had fled among the Five Nations. The Confederacy was now assembling under arms and appeared on the verge of marching. At this moment, although it may not have been widely realized, New France was in grave danger. The Fox might rally their allies and march from the West while the Five Nations closed in from the opposite direction. After catching the unprepared French allies in a pincer and putting them to rout the Fox and Iroquois could turn their united strength against New France. Without their historic allies and faced by the joint force of the Confederacy and southwestern tribes it is difficult to see how the colony could have staved off defeat.

Vaudreuil was aware of the threat. As early as 1710 he had been authorized to send Louvigny to Michilimackinac with Lignery as second in command. The possibility of an English attack,

41. "C'est à cause de cette guerre [des Renards] qu'on s'est résolu à rétablir Michilimackinac, pour entretenir dans notre alliance les Outaouais, Saulteurs, Miamis, Illinois, Puants et Folles-Avoines qui ont toujours été dans nos intérêts..." Observations sur la guerre des Renards, s.d., AM, B 1, vol. 8, p. 251.

42. "Il est très sur que la défaite des Renards fera revenir à Missilimackina une grande partie des sauvages qui s'en estoient éloignés, mais aussi si l'on manque le coup et qu'ils viennent de nouveau à se disperser on n'y reviendra jamais et les Renards quoiqu'abbatus... par le moyen de leurs alliés les détruiront tous les uns après les autres." Vaudreuil au ministre, 23 juillet 1712, AC, C 11 A, vol. 33, p. 43v.

however, had made it necessary to retain these two officers in the colony. Pontchartrain, moreover, had consistently passed under silence the question of the garrison, although the governor had pointed out in 1711 that officers would be useless without soldiers to assist them.⁴³ In 1712, with the Iroquois apparently preparing an attack against the allies, Vaudreuil decided to take immediate action. In July he informed Pontchartrain that he would wait thirty days more for his instructions to arrive. "Mais après cela je vous prie de ne trouver pas mauvais que je prenne sur moy une chose d'où dépend pour Sa Majesté la conservation des pays d'en hault."⁴⁴ By September, Lignery had been sent off to Michilimackinac with an undertermined number of Frenchmen. Louvigny, who was then detained in the colony, was scheduled to follow in the spring with twenty soldiers.

In planning Louvigny's departure, however, Vaudreuil had not foreseen the possible opposition of Michel Bégon, the new intendant. The governor proposed to finance the expedition by equipping ten canoes with merchandise taken from the King's stores or bought from the merchants. Profits from their sale, he calculated, would easily cover the cost of the trip and of the fort which had to be built.⁴⁵ Bégon disapproved of the plan. The prohibitive cost of merchandise made it impractical and furthermore Pontchartrain's authorization had not been received.⁴⁶ This issue almost provoked

43. Vaudreuil au ministre, 8 novembre 1711, AC, C 11 A, vol. 32, pp. 73v - 73bis.

44. Vaudreuil au ministre, 23 juillet 1712, AC, C 11 A, vol. 33, p. 43v.

45. Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 15 novembre 1713, AC, C 11 A, vol. 34, pp. 4v - 6v.

46. Vaudreuil au ministre, 15 mai 1713, Ibid., pp. 37 - 37v; Bégon au ministre, 20 septembre 1713, Ibid., pp. 129v - 131.

an open quarrel between the two administrators and resulted in Louvigny's departure for France in the fall of 1713 to press Vaudreuil's views. The trip turned out to be unnecessary. After unaccountably postponing a decision for three years, the minister finally forwarded his authorization by the ship leaving for Canada in the summer of 1713.⁴⁷ But delays of another nature now set in under the form of contrary winds which blew the vessel off course and obliged it to put in at Brest.

While Michilimackinac was being reoccupied, violence was erupting in several other regions. The recurrence of war between the Illinois and Ouyatanon Miamis in 1712 had created a state of emergency in the area south of Lake Michigan. In August an Illinois chief arrived in Montreal and asked Vaudreuil for a few Frenchmen who might provide them with ammunition which they badly lacked and arbitrate a settlement with the Miamis.⁴⁸ The governor immediately dispatched a group of men under des Liettes. Late in July or early in August, he received a letter from la Forest who had just arrived at Detroit to take over command of his post. He reported that the Ouyatanons, angry and afraid, had been thinking for some time of leaving their village and moving to a location which would be closer to the English settlements. Only Vincennes' influence could forestall them.⁴⁹ Again, Vaudreuil took it upon

47. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 25 juin 1713, AC, B, vol. 35, p. 275.

48. Parolles de Chachagouesse, autrement Nicanapé, chef Islinois, 20 août 1712, AC, C 11 A, vol. 33, pp. 91 - 94.

49. Vaudreuil au ministre, 6 novembre 1712, AC, C 11 A, vol. 33, p. 58v.

himself to send that agent to the troubled area. The restrictive system was fast breaking down at every point.

Vincennes arrived among the Miamis not a moment too soon. The Iroquois, in the hope of capitalizing on their plight, were inviting this nation to take up residence among them. Together, they pointed out, their warriors would be strong enough to annihilate their common enemies. Had it not been for Vincennes' timely arrival, wrote la Forest in 1713, the Ouyatanons might well have accepted the proposition the Iroquois had put to them.⁵⁰

Vincennes' presence did not put an immediate stop to Iroquois intrigue with the Ouyatanon Miamis. By 1713, the Fox had recovered from their defeat of their previous year and were on the warpath. Five Huron and three Frenchmen were slain at Detroit; a coureur named Lépine was killed near Green Bay.⁵¹ With typical Indian inconsistency, the northwestern tribes laid elaborate plans for a counterattack and then abandoned them.⁵² The Five Nations apparently decided that the confused state of the West had at last presented them with the long awaited opportunity to strike. When the Detroit Indians came down to Montreal to complain of the Fox and ask for Louvigny,⁵³ they reported that the Iroquois had presented gifts to the Ouyatanons in order to win their support and

50. Vaudreuil au ministre, 8 septembre 1713, AC, C 11 A, vol. 34, pp. 43v - 44.

51. Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 15 novembre 1713, AC, C 11 A, vol. 34, p. 13v.

52. Vaudreuil au ministre, 8 septembre 1713, Ibid., pp. 41v - 42v.

53. Louvigny's prestige among the Ottawas was equal to Joncaire's among the Senecas and Vincennes' among the Miamis. By 1713 those Indians were impatiently clamouring for him. Copie d'une lettre du R.P. Marest à Vaudreuil, 19 juin 1713, Ibid., p. 82v; Copie d'une lettre du R.P. Chardon à Vaudreuil, 29 juin 1713, Ibid., p. 83.

that of other tribes for an attack on Detroit. The Senecas themselves had promised to contribute six hundred men.⁵⁴

By 1713, however, the Iroquois were no longer free to initiate an independent policy in the West. To carry out a war on the French allies, in conjunction with the Fox, they required the support or at least the permission of the English. The treaty recently negotiated at Utrecht, however, was principally designed, in its American objectives, to pave the way for English commercial expansion into the West and such a policy presupposed peace.⁵⁵ In a sense, therefore, the Fox war interfered with English plans as much as it did with those of the French. By 1713, this war and English attempts to overrun the region of the Great Lakes were already emerging as the two principal problems of the post-war period. Under their impact a new French imperialism would be born.

From the metropolitan point of view the history of the West from 1703 to 1713 might well be described as a period of experimenting. During those years Pontchartrain was searching for a new formula which, applied to those territories, would prevent English expansion, curb excessive trading in beaver, and also eliminate the abuses of the brandy trade. Impressed by Cadillac, who promised to do all these things, the minister gave him a free

54. Parolles des sauvages, Hurons descendus du fort Pontchartrain du Détroit, 7 novembre 1713, Ibid., p. 66.

55. In May 1713 Vaudreuil reported that all was quiet on the New York frontier. As soon as the English learned of the conclusion of peace they hurriedly passed the news on to the Iroquois. "Je veux croire qu'il y ait un peu d'intérêt meslé dans cette affaire par rapport au commerce qu'ils font avec les nations d'en Haut," stated the governor, AC, C 11 A, vol. 34, p. 36v. In 1714 wampum belts were being distributed to all the western tribes asking them to come to terms with the Fox and take their trade to Albany. Vaudreuil au ministre, Ibid., p. 28lv.

hand in the West until the failure of his experiment became glaringly evident in 1709. Although this failure also showed the necessity of returning to some variation of the old system of posts and congés, Pontchartrain wavered and finally yielded to the Jesuits who opposed this solution in favor of one which would increase their own control of the West. By 1713, after ten years of hesitation, the minister had yet to come to a decision on this problem. He guaranteed some relief by 1718, but until then his negative system was to remain in force.

Pontchartrain's attitude can be explained in the light of the events of the seventeenth century and by a depressed beaver market. Yet it cannot be justified and must even be condemned. A colony planted in the wilderness, in the midst of undisciplined and often hostile tribes, could not withdraw into its shell and blissfully ignore the quarrels and battles of the Indians. The life of Canada rode on their outcome. The Iroquois, for instance, whose policy during the War of the Spanish Succession has never been fully understood, never abandoned their design of bringing down New France. In 1713, in conjunction with the Fox, they might well have succeeded in doing so had it not been for a sudden reversal in English policy. To avoid being destroyed, New France also had to reach out into the West and manipulate the Indian tribes. During ten years Vaudreuil had seen the colony, hampered by Pontchartrain's restrictions, edging closer and closer to the brink of disaster. Finally, he took it upon himself to reoccupy the West and face the minister with a fait accompli.

CHAPTER IX

The Treaty of Utrecht

The treaty of Utrecht, which ended the Anglo-French phase of the War of the Spanish Succession, was the result of a series of negotiations begun early in 1712. Attempts to negotiate a peace treaty had in fact begun as early as 1709 and 1710, at the Hague and Gertruydenberg. Each time, however, they had failed because of the intransigent demands of the allies who asked for nothing less than Louis XIV's active assistance to dislodge his grandson from the Spanish throne. By the final articles of peace, war-weary England at last acknowledged Philip V as the lawful king of Spain on condition that his crown and that of France should never be united. Despite this last stipulation, whose validity could be questioned, the recognition of a Bourbon dynasty in Spain was no hollow victory for Louis XIV. After 200 years, the danger of French territory being encircled by Hapsburg possessions had at last been dissipated and France's liberated energies could be turned to other objectives.¹

It would therefore be inaccurate to state that after 1713 England suddenly found herself transformed into Europe's foremost power. Although France had suffered greatly during the war her strength had only been temporarily impaired and twenty-five years

1. On the treaty of Utrecht see P. Renouvin, ed. Histoire des Relations internationales, vol. 3, p. 93 passim; J.W. Gerard, The Peace of Utrecht (London and New York, 1885), p. 161 passim.

later she would once more emerge as the most formidable power in the Old World. In the Americas, however, England's position had been immeasurably strengthened. The Asiento recognized her right of trade with the Spanish colonies while the surrender of St. Christopher's by the French added to her possessions in the West Indies. England's most important gains, however, were realized at the expense of France's North American possessions. Acadia, all of Newfoundland and Hudson Bay became British possessions; the protectorate established over the Five Nations provided New York with an avenue into the region of the Great Lakes; undefined boundaries between Canada and Acadia presented New England with the opportunity to expand toward the St. Lawrence. By thus exploding the confines which until then had restricted their expansion in both the East and West, the English shattered the North American colonial equilibrium. The French now had to fall back on new positions and devise a new defensive strategy. As early as 1700, France had been interested in the development of a series of posts along the Mississippi River to bar the English from the West. The policy had even gone into partial effect in 1701, with the founding of Detroit and Louisiana. Subsequently, however, as a result of the beaver blight, Jesuit pressure, the failure of Detroit and lack of interest in the development of Louisiana, the project had been allowed to lapse. For the duration of the War of the Spanish Succession, French policy in the West responded to the dictates of Pontchartrain's restrictive policy rather than to those of an imperialistic philosophy. But as a result of the British challenge which rang out in 1713, France would take up

with renewed vigor her imperial designs in the Great Lakes and Mississippi valley regions.

Other important changes overtook French colonial policy after the treaty of Utrecht. The sudden growth of English overseas power had caused alarm and concern at the French court and jarred the home administration out of its apathy toward colonial problems. Indeed, the character of this administration was itself undergoing important changes at this time. Pontchartrain had been disgraced shortly after the death of Louis XIV on September 1, 1715. The Council of the Marine which replaced him was down to earth and business-like in its approach to colonial problems and far less concerned with the humanitarian and ideological considerations which had so preoccupied the minister.² Basically, the tendencies of the Council may simply have reflected the increased power and importance which financial and commercial interests assumed in post-war France. A more determined effort to develop Canada's economic potential would herald the advent of this new era and inaugurate a thirty year period of intensive colonization which has gone down in history as the Thirty Years Peace.

It was perhaps not so much the inescapable force of events as the fact that the French plenipotentiaries were outmanoeuvred by their English counterparts which resulted in the disastrous colonial concessions ratified at Utrecht. In March 1712 the comptroller-general Nicolas Desmarets noted with concern "qu'on se porte à accorder tout ce qu'ils [the English] demandent en Amérique Septentrionale."³ Some years later abbé Bobé would blandly state that

2. M. Giraud, Histoire de la Louisiane française, (2 vol. Paris 1953 and 1958), vol. 21, p. 27 passim.

3. Desmarets à d'Huxelles, 20 mars 1712, AE, Mémoires et documents Amérique, vol. 24, p. 105v.

the French representatives, d'Huxelles, Polignac and Mesnager, had been unfamiliar with the situation in North America and poorly briefed by the home authorities. Had they driven a harder bargain, he thought, they might conceivably have maintained the status quo on Hudson Bay and preserved either Acadia or the French part of Newfoundland.⁴ There could well be some truth in this thesis. On one occasion, for instance, the plenipotentiaries complained that Pontchartrain's instructions were of no help in coping with English demands.⁵

From the minister's point of view, what mattered above all in the negotiations was to retain Acadia whose fisheries and strategic position made it an indispensable part of the French colonial empire. Hudson Bay, with only beaver to recommend it, was expendable. In fact, as a measure of last resort, the French might cede it to the English if the latter agreed in return to yield Acadia and abandon their claims to all of Newfoundland.⁶ To strengthen the French position at the conference table, Pontchartrain, until the cessation of hostilities was proclaimed in the summer of 1712, repeatedly asked Vaudreuil to attempt the reconquest of the lost province.⁷ The governor of Canada, however, who was himself threatened by the English on one hand and by a disintegrating western alliance on the other, could do little for Acadia outside

4. Mémoire concernant les limites des colonies présenté en 1720 par le sr. Bobé... s.d., AC, C 11 E, vol. 2, p. 175.

5. Les plenipotentiaires à Pontchartrain, 6 décembre 1712, AE, Mémoires et documents Amérique, vol. 24, pp. 92v - 93.

6. Mémoire... pour Mess'rs. les Plénipotentiaires du Roy, 2 janvier 1712, AE, Mémoires et documents Amérique, vol. 24, pp. 27 - 36v.

7. Le ministre à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 26 juin 1712, AC, B, vol. 34, p. 363.

of fomenting local resistance. The minister was also handicapped by the nation's overwhelming desire for peace. On one occasion he confided to the plenipotentiaries that these sentiments rendered France oblivious to her true interests in America.⁸ In a sense he was right. In December 1712, for instance, before the question of Acadia's boundaries had been resolved, Louis XIV cut the negotiations short. This matter should not be allowed to stand in the way of a formal peace treaty and could always be settled afterwards by a Commission specially appointed for that purpose.⁹ The basic problem of the province's limits therefore remained unresolved. Article 12 of the treaty vaguely decreed that Acadia "with its ancient boundaries" together with the city of Port Royal and its dependencies should be delivered to the English. In the absence of specific geographic references which might have indicated what those ancient boundaries were, both sides were left free to interpret the clause the way they wished. This confused situation, however, was of no advantage to the French who had nothing to gain and everything to lose on their eastern frontier. With the English, the case was reversed. New England could now give its expansionism free rein by claiming that Acadia's ancient boundaries included everything below Quebec and south of the St. Lawrence. The French, who could not allow these pretensions to go unchallenged, maintained that Acadia was limited to the peninsula and could not be deemed to extend to any part of the mainland. Both sides attempted to strengthen their respective case

8. Le ministre aux Plénipotentiaires, 14 mai 1712, AE, Mémoires et documents Amérique, vol. 24, pp. 76 - 77.

9. Le ministre aux Plénipotentiaires, 21 décembre 1712, Ibid., p. 95.

by quoting profusely from the early geographers and historians of the New World and by appealing to the right of discovery, occupation and conquest.¹⁰

French positions along the New England border were further weakened by a boundary agreement known as the Convention of 1700. In that year Callières and the New England authorities had decided to regard the St. George River, a stream situated some distance east of Casco Bay, as the limit between their respective provinces.¹¹ This agreement had been lost sight of during the War of the Spanish Succession but with the return of peace it had to be taken into account. As a result, the French could no longer claim for themselves the area located between the St. George River and Casco Bay. Ramezay and Bégon even stated that no matter how the boundaries were settled it would fall to England.¹² The Norridgewok mission, however, was located on this territory and the group of Abenakis who lived in its vicinity continued to look upon these lands as their own. Because these Norridgewok Indians were perhaps the most loyal of all the French allies, Charlevoix, in his important memoir on the Eastern question, stated that the French had to uphold their pretensions.¹³ The court itself was hoping that once the status of the Abenakis as French allies was

10. [anonymous] Discussion sommaire sur les anciennes limites de l'Acadie et sur les stipulations du traité d'Utrecht qui y sont relatives (Basle, 1755); T. Jefferys, The Conduct of the French with regard to Nova Scotia from its first Settlement to the present Time (London 1754).

11. Mémoire du Roy pour le sr. comte de Broglie, ambassadeur en Angleterre, 11 avril 1724, AC, B, vol. 46, pp. 72 - 73; Copie d'une lettre écrite par Vaudreuil au gouverneur de Baston, 30 octobre 1724, AC, C 11 A, vol. 46, p. 137.

12. Ramezay et Bégon au Conseil de la marine, 7 novembre 1715, AM, B 1, vol. 8, p. 328v.

13. Mémoire sur les limites de l'Acadie, 19 octobre 1720, AC, C 11 E, vol. 2, p. 63.

recognized by the English the boundary could be pushed back to Casco Bay.¹⁴ Apparently the home authorities did not realize that since the New Englanders had always considered these Indians as their own rebel subjects the possibility that they would ever agree to regard them as French allies was very remote. As a result of this confused situation it devolved largely upon Vaudreuil to find a way of sustaining Indian claims. In an effort to solve this problem and find a legal basis upon which action could be taken to exclude the English from all the territories east of Casco Bay, the governor developed two arguments. In the first place, the territories east of the St. George River were part of New France and therefore closed to the English. Secondly, the area situated between the St. George River and Casco were inhabited by a free people, the Abenakis, who had willingly placed themselves under the protection of the King of France. The English, therefore, could not settle their land without their consent.¹⁵ These two arguments of course made little impression on the English who simply countered with their own interpretation of the treaty of Utrecht and produced title deeds to prove that the Abenakis had sold their land to the English.¹⁶ Nonetheless, Vaudreuil had succeeded in establishing some sort of legal foundation upon which he could base his Eastern policy after 1713.

The reason why it was so important for the French to prevent the English from expanding beyond Casco Bay is easy enough to

14. Mémoire du Roy pour le sr. comte de Broglie, ambassadeur en Angleterre, 11 avril 1724, AC, B, vol. 46, p. 73.

15. Vaudreuil made full use of this argument in his letter to Dummer of October 30, 1724, AC, C 11 A, vol. 46, pp. 137 - 138v.

16. See below, p. 330.

ascertain. On these lands, which include present day Maine, New Brunswick and the Gaspé peninsula, Father Aubry pointed out that the only clear demarcation line was the Alleghany mountain range. But to accept this landmark as the boundary would bring the English to the doors of Quebec. Except for a narrow strip of land along the St. Lawrence River, which would have to be evacuated at the first signs of war, New France would be divested of everything east of the river except for Cape Breton Island. All the French could do, he concluded, was to attempt forcing upon the English their concept of a peninsular Acadia.¹⁷ Father Charlevoix brought out another important consideration. Should the French yield to English pressure they would lose control of the Abenakis. The New Englanders would then be in a position to infiltrate these Indians and win their allegiance by their cheap trade goods. As an aftermath the missionaries would be expelled and the religious tie would snap. Like Aubry, Charlevoix thought that the French had no alternative but to hold fast to the disputed territories.¹⁸

A problem of analogous dimensions had been created in the Great Lakes and Mississippi valley regions by article 15 of the peace treaty. Here again, careful phrasing left the boundaries undefined and paved the way for British expansion. "The Subjects of France inhabiting Canada," the clause began, "shall hereafter

17. Mémoire du Père Aubry, Jésuite missionnaire de Canada, sur les limites de la Nouvelle-France et de la Nouvelle Angleterre, janvier 1720, AC, C 11 E, vol. 2, pp. 91 - 91v.

18. Mémoire sur les limites de l'Acadie envoyé... à Mgr le duc d'Orléans, régent, par le Père Charlevoix Jésuite, 19 octobre 1720, AC, C 11 E, vol. 2, pp. 63v - 64.

give no Hindrance or Molestation to the Five Nations or Cantons of Indians subject to the Dominion of Great Britain nor to the other natives of America who are Friends to the same."¹⁹

The implications of this statement were revolutionary. Since the days of Dongan the English had been hoping to bypass the Confederacy and trade directly with the Western Indians. Now, by virtue of this clause, they were reducing the Iroquois to the status of British dependents thereby taking possession of their lands and moving the boundaries of New York to the heart of the Great Lakes country.²⁰ It is important to note that if the Iroquois had been strong enough to withstand English pressure this clause would have been absolutely meaningless. The Five Nations would then hardly have allowed the English unmolested passage through their land simply because a treaty negotiated between France and England declared them British subjects. But the Iroquois were no longer the powerful nation they once had been and this is precisely why the clause is so important. It made it legally permissible for the English to exploit their weakness. In fact, had they wished to do so, the New Yorkers could almost certainly have overrun the territories of the Confederacy as early as 1701 or 1702. The Five Nations, anxious to gain protection against the Upper Indians,

19. Treaty of Peace and Friendship ... concluded at Utrecht the 31 / 11 day of March / April 1713 (London 1713), pp. 74 - 75.

20. The abbé Bobé soon put his finger on basic English strategy, something which the French plenipotentiaries had obviously not done when the treaty was being negotiated. "Il y a longtemps que les Anglois tâchent de pénétrer dans les grands lacs et dans les pays d'en haut pour s'emparer du commerce des pelleteries et c'est sans doute pour venir à bout de leur dessein qu'ils ont obligé la France de leur céder la souveraineté du pays des Iroquois à la paix d'Utrecht." Mémoire concernant les limites des colonies présenté en 1720 par le sr. Bobé ... s.d., AC, C 11 E, vol. 2, p. 205v.

would have viewed favorably New York's western expansion at this time. Out of apathy, however, and perhaps also because they feared that expansion in time of war would anger the French into breaking the truce with their province, the Dutch and English merchants had refrained from embarking upon an expansionist course. Until the conclusion of peace they had been satisfied to rely upon contraband for their supply of fur and to encourage the Iroquois to grant the Western tribes a free passage to Albany. Although they felt freer to act after 1713 it was still essential to prevent opposition from Canada. This is undoubtedly what clause 15 was intended to achieve. The Iroquois being British subjects, the French would have no reason to protest or interfere once New York had launched its epochal breakthrough to the Lakes. This hope of paralyzing French diplomacy was only partly fulfilled. Although the Jesuit missions were not reopened, Longueuil and Joncaire, who had been adopted into the Onondaga and Seneca nations, could not be excluded from the Confederacy. They would continue serving the French cause among the Iroquois in much the same way as before 1713.

The second part of this article was no less important. The English apparently feared that the French would attempt to foil their strategy by invoking the status of the western tribes. Being French allies, it might be claimed, their trade belonged entirely to New France. Not only did the treaty of Utrecht destroy the validity of such an objection but it also gave explicit legal sanction to trade between the English and the western Indians.

On both sides they [the French and the English] shall enjoy full Liberty of going and coming on account of trade. As also the Natives of those countries shall, with the same Liberty, resort as they please to the British and French Colonies, for Promoting Trade on one side or the other without any Molestation or Hindrance.²¹

The English lost no time in attempting to exploit the advantages they had gained in the West. The powerful drive launched by the southern colonies between 1713 and 1715 to expel the French from the Mississippi valley²² served as an indication of what might be expected along the New England border and in the region of the Great Lakes. The Carolina traders spread among the Natchez, the Illinois and the Miamis, and threatened to wean those Indians from the French interest and disrupt communications between Canada and Louisiana. Their well-publicized intention of establishing trading posts and encouraging immigration to the interior showed that the English were bent on nothing less than permanent occupation of the Mississippi basin. Vincennes informed Ramezay that they intended building three posts, one near Mobile, a second on the lower Mississippi and a third on the Wabash.²³ According to Father Mermet, a missionary among the Illinois, the governor of Carolina had asked for 1500 men to garrison these forts.²⁴ Roughly the same reports reached LeMoyne de Bienville, a former governor of Louis-

21. Treaty of Peace and Friendship... concluded at Utrecht the 31 / 11 day of March / April 1713, (London 1713), p. 75.

22. M. Giraud, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 299.

23. Ramezay et Bégon au ministre, 13 septembre 1715, AC, C 11 A, vol. 35, p. 11v; Ramezay au ministre, 16 septembre 1715, Ibid., p. 73v; Ramezay au ministre, 28 octobre 1715, Ibid., p. 90v.

24. Ramezay au ministre, 16 septembre 1715, Ibid., p. 73v.

iana, while on a mission to the interior.²⁵

Antoine Crozat, the influential proprietor of Louisiana and a key figure in the movement for French counter-expansion, was seriously alarmed. In a series of memoirs presented to Pontchartrain in 1713 and 1714 he pointed out that the success of French colonization in America depended on effective control of the Mississippi river. Should the English appropriate this waterway the southern approaches to Canada, which was already weakened on the seacoast, would be thrown open. Louisiana for its part would be deprived of its chief commercial artery. Furthermore, in view of mounting demographic pressures within the British settlements, one could envisage the day when this population would pour across the interior and drive a wedge into Mexico. To oppose British hegemony and defend the interests of French North America he proposed the erection of three forts in the areas most exposed to English infiltration: a first on the Wabash, which was one of the principal approaches to the Mississippi, a second among the Natchez and a third among the Illinois.²⁶

The movement launched by Louisiana interests in favor of French expansion must have lent powerful support to Vaudreuil's own campaign for the reoccupation of the posts. In 1713 Pontchartrain suddenly yielded on both issues. He authorized the reoccupation of Michilimackinac and the founding of two posts by Louisiana, one among the Natchez and another on the Wabash.²⁷ Recruits were sent

25. Bienville au ministre, 15 juin 1715, AC, C 13 A, vol. 3, pp. 827 - 832.

26. Crozat au ministre, s.d., AC, C 13 A, vol. 3, pp. 363 - 365; Crozat au ministre, 17 avril 1714, Ibid., pp. 623 - 635. On Crozat and his views see M. Giraud, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 229 passim.

27. Mémoire du Roy à Ramezay et Bégon, 10 juillet 1715, AC, B, vol. 37, pp. 184 - 184v.

out from France to serve as garrisons and Vaudreuil was asked to cooperate by sending fifty Canadians to the Wabash.²⁸ The actual task of foundation was entrusted to the capable Bienville. In 1715 Ramezay and Bégon were ordered to send between eight and ten soldiers to St. Louis des Illinois where they could serve as a regular garrison under des Liettes who had been there since 1712.²⁹ It was now the English who began to fear "French designs for the Mississippi."³⁰

Canada could not remain indifferent to the struggle for control of the Mississippi basin. Ramezay, who replaced Vaudreuil as governor from 1714 to 1716 while the latter was in France on leave, pointed out that English occupation of the interior "causera la ruine entière de la colonie."³¹ Once implanted in Illinois country they could spread among the Ottawa tribes and win their commercial and military allegiance. To keep the English out of the West Ramezay, like Crozat, proposed the development of a chain of strategically located and strongly garrisoned posts. Outside the three which had already gained court approval he suggested a small fort at Chicago and a more considerable one among the Tamarois.³²

28. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 8 juin 1713, AC, B, vol. 35, pp. 273 - 273v; Le ministre à Bégon, 13 mai 1714, AC, B, vol. 36, pp. 335 - 335bis.

29. Mémoire du Roy à Ramezay et Bégon, 10 juillet 1715, AC, B, vol. 37, p. 184v.

30. Remarks upon the French settlements in North America, March 11, 1715, CSPA 1714 - 1715, pp. 115 - 116.

31. Ramezay au ministre, 16 septembre 1715, AC, C 11 A, vol. 35, p. 73v.

32. Etablissements nouveaux faits par les François sur le fleuve du Mississippi et autres établissements proposés dans les Pays hauts, 7 novembre 1715, AC, C 11 A, vol. 36, p. 222.

The first would serve as a link between the territories of the Illinois and Canada while the second would reduce to discipline the considerable body of renegades who had settled in that area. Until this program could be implemented, he dispatched his son and Longueuil's to the threatened areas where they urged the Indians to expel the English and allow the French to plunder their supply convoys.³³ Farther south, Bienville was similarly inciting the Indians to pillage the English traders.³⁴ This policy may have materially contributed to the outbreak of the ferocious Yamasee war which burst upon Carolina in the summer of 1715. The Creeks, Chactas, Alibamos and Cherokees rebelled against the English, drove out their traders and ravaged the Carolina border settlements.³⁵ This sudden mass defection of the Indians put an end to the first large scale British attempt to wrest the Mississippi valley from France.

As reports of this British offensive on the interior poured into France, the attitude of the mother country toward her colonies began to change. The apathy which is so prominent in the treaty of Utrecht gave way to concern and even alarm lest the British impose their hegemony over the entire continent. Pontchartrain, who had obviously been strongly impressed by Crozat's memoirs, was among the first to react.

Jérôme de Pontchartrain remains one of the most interesting figures of the French colonial field during the Old Régime. Most

33. Ramezay et Bégon au ministre, 13 septembre 1715, AC, C 11 A, vol. 35, p. 11v.

34. Bienville au ministre, 15 juin 1715, AC, C 13 A, vol. 3, pp. 827 - 832.

35. V.W. Crane, The Southern Frontier 1670 - 1732 (Ann Arbor, 1959), p. 167 passim.

of the considerations which gave French colonization its distinctive character during this period are eminently reflected in his policy. This policy, however, did not remain static but underwent considerable modification as the years wore on. Initially, his outlook on society, which combined sympathy for the agrarian element and the humbler classes together with indifference for and distrust of the moneyed bourgeoisie, made him essentially unfit to preside over colonization which is perhaps the most capitalistic of all social ventures. The Raudots, who had been selected as intendants to give "quelque forme au Conseil Souverain de Québec"³⁶ perfectly represented his ideals in the colony. Jacques Raudot thought that public affairs should be conducted "comme un bon père de famille conduiroit sa terre."³⁷ During his tenure he made a constant effort to follow this dictum, particularly in the field of justice.³⁸

By 1712, with war fast coming to a close, Pontchartrain was re-examining his early positions and elaborating a policy which would put both the powers of the middle class and the resources of the state to better use. The administrators were instructed to protect the merchants and facilitate their various enterprises but at the same time to abide by a strict laissez-faire where their internal affairs were concerned.³⁹ In order to encourage emulation

36. Tremblay à Laval, 4 avril 1705, ASQ, carton N, no. 122.

37. Quoted in G. Frégault, La civilisation de la Nouvelle France, (Montréal, 1944), p. 135.

38. See below pp. 364-365.

39. Mémoire du Roi à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 15 juin 1712, AC, B, vol. 34, p. 315v.

the more successful ones among them were to be honoured with special marks of consideration. The choice of Michel Bégon to succeed the Raudots was perhaps indicative of this new spirit. While Jacques Raudot was a former magistrate of the Cour des Aides, Bégon had been intendant at Rochefort, one of France's leading seaports. His duties had brought him in frequent contact with shipowners and provided him with a thorough grounding in the principles of maritime commerce. At the same time, Pontchartrain was making an effort to stimulate immigration. In March, 1714 all merchant vessels sailing for Canada were obliged to take out four engagés and eight recruits for the colonial troops.⁴⁰ In the hope of developing agriculture the system of land tenure was also being changed. All future land grants, it was decreed, should be en roture instead of en seigneurie.⁴¹

In his correspondence with Nicolas Desmarets, the comptroller-general, Pontchartrain was emphasizing "la nécessité absolue de peupler les colonies." It was the colonies, he pointed out, which England had developed over a number of years through a massive emigration, which formed the basis of that country's wealth and power. With the advent of peace the times were auspicious for France to follow this example. Indeed, it was urgent for her to do so. Otherwise, the next war between France and England might result in the total expulsion of the French from the American

40. Ordonnance qui oblige les v'aux marchands qui iront à l'avenir en la Nouvelle France d'y porter quatre engagés et huit soldats de recrue, 20 mars 1714, AC, B, vol. 36, p. 336v.

41. Mémoire du Roi à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 19 mars 1714, AC, B, vol. 36, p. 342.

continent. Pontchartrain thought that a sizeable emigration movement to America could be developed by drawing upon the large number of destitute families who led economically unproductive lives in France. The cost of transportation need not be a burden to the state since, as Crozat had suggested, it could be financed by means of lotteries. Desmarets, however, refused to subscribe to this plan. The families which the Minister of the Marine proposed to send to the colonies were needed in France to help the country recover from the losses it had suffered during the war. Rebuffed on this point, Pontchartrain made an effort to gain his consent to the immigration of young men and women. Their departure could not be put down as a loss of manpower since these young people would probably leave for foreign lands in search of money and adventure. Frenchmen were scattered to the four corners of the earth⁴² and this tendency to emigrate was increased by the widespread misery which resulted from war.⁴³ In the colonies, at least, they would be useful to the realm. This argument failed to convince Desmarets who remained steadfast in his refusal.

When Vaudreuil arrived in France late in 1714 there already existed a powerful group, led by Crozat and Pontchartrain, which insisted that more of the country's attention and resources be devoted to the task of colonization. This climate would provide Vaudreuil with a favorable opportunity to expose the needs of Canada. But in those final months of the reign of Louis XIV an

42. Le ministre à Desmarets, 4 octobre 1714, AC, B, vol. 36, p. 265v; Le ministre à Desmarets, 19 octobre 1714, Ibid., pp. 278 - 278v.

43. Giraud, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 237.

acute shortage of funds had paralyzed the Ministry of the Marine in both branches of its service: the Navy and the Colonies. Life was coming to a standstill in the seaports as local treasurers of the ministry found themselves without the funds to carry on their operations. The situation had become so serious by 1715 that ships rotted and sank as they lay at anchor; the personnel of the ports was reduced to begging for its daily bread; the sick died unattended in the hospitals.⁴⁴ An equally serious situation developed in Canada when Gaudion, the ministry's treasurer-general, allowed the bills of exchange from the colony to go to protest because of Desmarets' failure to remit the needed funds.⁴⁵ The military and civil officers, pensioned widows, and generally all those who lived off a fixed income had already been dealt a hard blow by the court's decision to redeem card money at half its face value.⁴⁶ It was now the turn of the merchants who had accepted those bills of exchange to be threatened with bankruptcy.⁴⁷ Only after the advent of the Regency and the formation of the councils would the situation show some improvement.

The memoirs submitted by Vaudreuil to the ministry and later to the Council of the Marine drew upon the same basic philosophy as those of Crozat and Pontchartrain. Like Louisiana and the

44. Le ministre à Desmarets, 5 juin 1715, AM, B 2, vol. 241, p. 713; Le ministre à Desmarets, 14 août 1715, AM, B 2, vol. 242, pp. 222 - 223.

45. Le ministre à Desmarets, 2 juillet 1715, AC, B, vol. 37, p. 123; Le ministre à Desmarets, 17 juillet 1715, Ibid., p. 133v.

46. G. Frégault, "Essai sur les finances canadiennes," RHAF, vol. 12, (1958 - 1959), p. 478.

47. Les négociants de la Rochelle au ministre, 7 septembre 1715, AM, B 1, vol. 1, p. 8v.

French American possessions generally, Canada was weak. At the most it could mobilize 4484 militia and 628 regulars while the English, by his estimation, could hurl as many as 60,000 men against the colony. The conclusion was obvious:

On ne peut douter un instant qu'à la première rupture entre la France et l'Angleterre les Anglois ne fassent de nouveaux efforts pour s'emparer de tout le Canada et par conséquent de toute l'Amérique septentrionale d'où il s'ensuivroit en peu d'années la perte du Mexique duquel ils chasseroient les Espagnols sans aucune résistance.

The loss of Canada would be irreparable since it would involve in short order the ruin of the fisheries which made up a sizeable part of French commerce. The appropriation of all America by England would also make it the most formidable power in Europe. The possibility of such a situation developing showed how necessary it was to use the period of peace to strengthen the colony by a civilian and military immigration. The governor thought the times extremely favorable for the enlisting of recruits because of the large number of soldiers who had been discharged at the end of the war. Where the civilian immigration was concerned, Vaudreuil made an effort to avoid the difficulties which Pontchartrain had encountered when dealing with Desmarets. Every year a number of fauxsauniers were condemned to the galleys. They became a dead-weight to the kingdom since they were withdrawn from the productive force and the galleys themselves were gradually falling into disuse. Vaudreuil therefore suggested that one hundred and fifty of them be sent out to Canada annually, where they could be usefully employed. A third category of useful emigrants would

consist of skilled workers who could help the colony make a
⁴⁸
 start in shipbuilding.

Developing Canada internally through a vigorous emigration was only the first of Vaudreuil's two-point program. It was no less important to strengthen the ties between the Indian allies and New France. Since these ties could only be as strong as French control over the West was effective and the alliance itself economically profitable, his second category of demands aimed at bolstering the colony at those two critical points.

The governor began by asking permission to establish all the posts he might judge necessary "pour le bien du service" without having to obtain the court's prior authorization. Waiting for such an authorization to arrive, he pointed out, might delay the projected establishments by as much as two years.⁴⁹ He also requested full power to deal with the commanding officers as he saw fit. This would enable him to appoint competent subjects and take prompt measures to remove those who manifested early signs of being unsuitable or incapable of discharging their duties in a satisfactory manner.⁵⁰ The governor also pressed the council on the problem of the congés. In July 1715, one and a half months before the death of Louis XIV, Pontchartrain had finally relented and authorized Ramezay and Bégon to distribute fifteen annually. Vaudreuil now asked that their number be increased to

48. Mémoire de M. de Vaudreuil, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 36, pp. 97 - 98v.

49. Mémoire à Son Altesse Royale, Mgr. le duc d'Orléans, régent du Royaume, février 1716, Ibid., p. 106v.

50. Postes à établir, s.d., AM, B 1, vol. 8, pp. 274v - 275.

twenty-five, all of them for Michilimackinac.⁵¹ Furthermore, the brandy trade should be revived, on a limited basis, at all the western posts on condition that it be carried out under the supervision of the commanding officer.⁵²

Brandy alone, however, was not sufficient to keep the Indians from going to the English. In order to counterbalance the latter's cheap trade goods the gifts to the allies would have to be considerably increased. Vaudreuil began by asking that the state subsidy annually appropriated for that purpose be raised to 20,000 livres. Independently of this amount the council should also undertake to forward to Canada 10,000 measures of powder, 15,000 of shot and 200 guns.⁵³ The fact that arms and ammunition represented perhaps the only fields outside of cutlery in which French industry bettered the English no doubt explains the governor's insistence on these wares. In February, 1716, he became even more demanding. His revised figures now called for a subsidy of 30,000 livres in 1716. Thereafter the gift should consist of 40,000 measures of powder, "la seule de nos marchandises que les sauvages préfèrent à celles des Anglois", 60,000 measures of shot and 600 of the reputed Tulles hunting guns. "Ce sont les meilleurs. Les sauvages les connaissent et n'en veulent point d'autres."⁵⁴ At a time when the British threat was becoming

51. The congé issue is discussed in detail in chapter 10.

52. Mémoire à Son Altesse Royale, Mgr. le duc d'Orléans, régent du Royaume, février 1716, AC, C 11 A, vol. 36, pp. 106v - 108v.

53. Ramezay et Bégon au Conseil, 7 novembre 1715, marginal note AM, B 1, vol. 8, p. 268v.

54. Mémoire à Mgr. le duc d'Orléans, régent du Royaume, février 1716, AC, C 11 A, vol. 36, pp. 105 - 106v.

formidable, Vaudreuil was asking the Council for a considerable effort on behalf of Canada.

The advent of the Council of the Marine, headed by the comte de Toulouse, had been greeted with enthusiasm by French colonial and mercantile interests. The ordonnateur, Marc Antoine Hubert, thought of it as the dawn of a new day for Louisiana.⁵⁵ Generally speaking, all these hopes were not misplaced. The creation of the Company of the Occident in 1717, which recalls the early colonial policy of Colbert, reflects a determination to invest a sizeable portion of French resources in the field of colonial trade. At the same time, to quicken the pace of commerce, the laws regulating this trade were reviewed and codified while the duties on French manufactures intended for the colonies were abolished.⁵⁶

Canada itself was not neglected. The council was convinced that this colony "par les différentes denrées qui s'y trouvent, peut s'avérer dans les suites très utile au royaume." The value of its commerce might easily reach 400,000 or 500,000 livres annually and employ forty or fifty ships instead of the three or four presently engaged in the Canada trade.⁵⁷ In response to Vaudreuil's demand for emigration, 198 recruits were sent back with him in 1716, 150 in 1717 and a sizeable group, usually 100,

55. "Si jusqu'à la mort du feu Roy... on a regardé les colonies avec assez d'indifférence... le goust que la Régence... prend aujourd'hui fait espérer que celle-cy sera plu favorablement traitée." M.A. Hubert, Mémoire sur la colonie de la Louisiane, octobre 1717, AC, C 13 A, vol. 5, p. 143.

56. Lettres patentes du Roy portant règlement pour le commerce des colonies françoises, avril 1717, AE, vol. 11, pp. 7 - 13v.

57. Instructions pour le Gouverneur et Intendant du Canada, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 36, pp. 47 - 50.

every year thereafter. After a short period of service in the troops it was understood that they would be free to settle in the colony.⁵⁸ At the same time the merchant vessels sailing to Canada were enjoined to take out their quota of engagés.⁵⁹ Intensified emigration went hand in hand with a far more vigorous western policy. 20,000 livres were to be annually appropriated for gifts to the Indians, and in 1716 Vaudreuil took back an extraordinary present consisting of 200 guns, 15,000 measures of powder and 10,000 of shot.⁶⁰ The twenty-five congés were restored and the governor was given full powers to build the posts he would judge necessary and to appoint the officers of his choice.⁶¹ After almost twenty years of restrictions all the checks on expansion were being suddenly removed.

Despite the importance the French authorities were beginning to attach to Canada the basic work of Utrecht had not been undone. The problems created by uncertain boundaries, the English right of trade with the French allies, the protectorate established over the Five Nations remained as acute as ever. As English expansionist

58. The annual levies from 1716 to 1725 were the following: 1716, 191, AC, C 11 A, vol. 36, pp. 67 - 68; 1717, 150, AC, B, vol. 39, pp. 208v - 209; 1718, 100, AC, B, vol. 40, p. 462; 1719, 100, AC, B, vol. 41, p. 523; 1720, 100, AC, B, vol. 42, p. 430; 1721, 100, AC, B, vol. 41, p. 523; 1720, 100, AC, B, vol. 42, p. 430; 1721, 100, AC, B, vol. 44, pp. 535v - 536; 1722, 65, AC, B, vol. 45, p. 818; 1723 and 1724 no figures. The 64 sent out in 1725 perished when le Chameau was wrecked off Cape Breton Island.

59. Mémoire du Roi à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 26 juin 1717, AC, B, vol. 39, p. 234v.

60. Mémoire du Roi à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 15 juin 1716, RAPQ 1947 - 1948, p. 300.

61. Etablissements nouveaux faits par les François sur le fleuve Mississippi et autres établissements proposés pour les Pays hauts, 7 novembre 1715, AC, C 11 A, vol. 36, p. 222.

designs became daily more evident the administrators and missionaries began to press for an immediate settlement of the boundary issue. Ramezay urged "la nécessité qu'il y a de régler au plus-tôt les limites... sans quoy les Anglois feront plus de progrès dans cette collonie tant du coté de l'acadie, de baston, de manath et de la caroline en temps de paix que lorsque nous avons la guerre avec eux."⁶² The abbé Bobé was equally explicit:

L'exorbitante étendue qu'ils donnent à leur imaginaire Nouvelle Ecosse et les vastes pais qu'ils prétendent de tous cotés sous prétexte de règlement de limites doivent convaincre la France que si elle ne tient ferme qu'à la fin les Anglois s'empareront de toute l'Amérique françoise aussi bien en temps de paix qu'en temps de guerre ouverte.⁶³

If the commission on boundaries called for by article 10 of the treaty of Utrecht was to convene, the initiative would clearly have to come from the French. The situation which prevailed in America was so favorable to the English that it was clearly not in their interest to make any move in this direction. France, however, was unwilling to apply the strong pressure which would no doubt have been necessary to oblige England to conform to this clause. "Les Anglois n'ont pas pressé l'exécution de cet article et il paroist que nous ne sommes pas dans un tems favorable pour le régler avantageusement," runs an illuminating comment of the Council of the Marine on one of Ramezay's dispatches.⁶⁴ French

62. Ramezay au ministre, 28 octobre 1715, AC, C 11 A, vol. 35, p. 92.

63. Mémoire concernant les limites des colonies présenté en 1720 par le sr. Bobé... s.d., AC, C 11 E, vol. 2, pp. 202v - 203.

64. Ramezay au Conseil de la Marine, 16 septembre 1715, AM, B 1, vol. 8, pp. 291v - 292.

reluctance to press the English on this point may have due to fears of causing friction and ill-feeling between the two powers at a time when the Regency made the Anglo-French alliance the very basis of its foreign policy. Louis XV, the sickly boy king, appeared doomed to an early death. Should the French throne become vacant Philip V of Spain, who had never subscribed to the treaty of Utrecht, could be expected to claim it for himself. The Duke of Orleans, Regent of France, who was next in line of succession, would require English help to defeat the aims of the King of Spain and secure the Crown of France. Stanhope, principal minister of George I, similarly required French co-operation to repress the Jacobites who were working for the overthrow of the Hanoverians and the restoration of the Stuarts. The anxiety of the two great powers to preserve the European peace and to assure their internal stability led to the Anglo-French alliance of October 1716, which revolutionized European politics.⁶⁵ This treaty showed quite well that dynastic considerations and the issue of European tranquillity took precedence over unresolved problems in the colonies. Only when it appeared that a new war was on the point of breaking out in America as a result of the confused boundary question were steps finally taken to summon the commission. The French and English representatives met briefly in Paris in 1720 in a futile attempt to clear Utrecht's troubled legacy. Coming at this time a decision on the boundaries might have done something to relieve a tense situation. But as a result of the failure to arrive at an understanding the position of the

65. W.L. Langer, ed., The Rise of Modern Europe, vol. 8, pp. 18 - 20.

protagonists hardened and made a renewed clash inevitable.

After having abolished Pontchartrain's restrictive system and granted Vaudreuil very broad powers in America it is rather odd that the home authorities should adopt such a timid position on the question of the colonial limits. These conflicting tendencies in French colonial policy at the metropolitan and colonial levels, which suggest inadequate liaison between the Council of the Regency and that of the Marine, could easily lead to serious difficulties with England. The Council of the Marine appears to have realized this. On a number of occasions it made feeble attempts to avoid complications by ordering Vaudreuil to act cautiously and with due regard for English feelings. Until the limits were settled, he was told in 1715, the French were to maintain themselves in possession of those territories "qui estoient censés nous appartenir excepté ceux spécifiquement cédés."⁶⁶ The same instructions occur in 1716 with slightly more accent on the necessity of conciliation. "Elle [Louis XV] souhaite que le sr. de Vaudreuil se maintienne avec douceur mais cependant avec fermeté dans la possession des pays qui ont toujours appartenu à la France ... mais il ne doit point s'opposer aux autres établissements que ces peuples [the English] pourroient entreprendre dans les endroits qui leur sont spécifiquement cédés par le traité d'Utrecht."⁶⁷ Again in 1717, Vaudreuil was told to observe carefully English tactics with the Indian allies but to remain on

66. Ramezay au Conseil de la Marine, 16 septembre 1715, AM, B 1, vol. 8, pp. 291v - 292.

67. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 15 juin 1716, AC, B, vol. 38, p. 224.

friendly terms with the English governors.⁶⁸ Only if clear distinctions had existed between France's and England's North American possessions could these statements of the Council have indicated a course of action. Because such distinctions did not exist it was largely up to Vaudreuil to make them and shape his policy accordingly.

At this point it should be noted that a great deal depended on the governor's character and personality. A timid administrator could interpret the Council's instructions to mean that he should yield to the English in order to avoid a direct clash with them. One more boldly inclined could place a different interpretation on these briefings and take an unyielding stand when he judged that French interests were vitally involved. Vaudreuil was clearly a governor of the second type. Shortly after the conclusion of peace he seems to have decided that in the Mississippi valley, the region of the Great Lakes, and the Casco Bay area, the French could not afford to compromise. Already in 1714 he had begun to formulate a program to defend these regions. Recalling that it was only by inciting the Abenakis to wage war on the English that he had prevented them from deserting the French cause during the War of the Spanish Succession, he had written to Pontchartrain:

J'ose dire par rapport non seulement aux sauvages [Abenakis] mais encore à toutes les nations qui sont dans nos intérêts que la guerre avec l'Angleterre nous estoit plus favorable que la paix. Je ne scay même par rapport à nos véritables intérêts s'il n'est pas à souhaiter que la guerre avec les nations d'en haut [the Fox War]

68. Le Conseil de la Marine à Vaudreuil, 26 juin 1717, AC, B, vol. 39, p. 222v.

dure encore quelques années plustôt que de faciliter aux Anglois les moyens de se les attirer entièrement ... C'est une réflexion du Père Marest... qu'il y a longtems que je fais moi - même.⁶⁹

The main point in this dispatch, that in both the East and West French interests might best be served by means of war, shows clearly the type of defensive policy favoured by Vaudreuil. With the return of peace, however, it was clearly impossible to act on such a basis. Nonetheless, as will be shown subsequently, Vaudreuil's administration between 1713 and 1725 is largely the story of his hardening attitude in the face of English pressure, of the development of progressively bolder and more desperate measures to keep the English from engrossing more of North America. As a result of these tactics a practical state of war existed in both the East and West by the time of his death in 1725. In the light of these events it seems that the governor never quite forgot the ideas he had expressed in 1714.

The treaty of Utrecht is the great turning point in the history of New France as well as in the career of Vaudreuil. It obliged the French colonial authorities to reject every aspect of Pontchartrain's restrictive system, which had already begun to break down under the impact of the Fox War, and to revive the imperial policy of 1700. French colonial policy acquired important new characteristics as a result of this decision. Until 1713, arguments in favor of the occupation of the West stressed economic considerations and the necessity of maintaining peace among the allies. These objectives are still present after the return

69. Vaudreuil au ministre, 16 septembre 1714, AC, C 11 A, vol. 34, pp. 289v - 290.

of peace, sometimes dominantly so, but it now becomes evident that the thin edge of the movement is turned against English expansion. Nor could such a policy long remain purely defensive in character. The growing realization that English power was largely based on her colonial possessions would soon give rise to a desire to restrict English development not solely to protect the French settlements but also to weaken England itself. The English were alive to the dangerous implications of French consolidation on the Mississippi. As early as 1714 Robert Hunter informed the Earl of Dartmouth that "some new measures lately resolved upon in France for planting and establishing colonies on the river Messasipe all along the backs of our settlements has given great umbrage and apprehensions in these parts least in time these settlements deprive us of the trade and dependence of the natives."⁷⁰ The English, however, were not prepared to deviate from any of their designs to induce the French to reciprocal concessions. The treaty of Utrecht had set down the basic pattern of their policy which would endure until the final struggle for possession of America. In 1755, after reviewing English claims to the Ohio country, the Great Lakes and Acadia, the Minister of the Marine Machault pointed out to Pierre de Rigaud de Vaudreuil that "dans ce système ils enlèveroient aux François tous les établissements qu'ils possèdent au sud du fleuve St. Laurent et que la colonie... se trouveroit réduite à ceux qu'ils ont au nord du même fleuve et dans lesquelles elle se trouveroit bientôt gênée par l'étendue que les Anglois ne manqueront pas de vouloir donner à leurs limites

70. Hunter to the Earl of Dartmouth, March 14, 1714, CSPA 1712 - 1714, p. 157.

de la Baie d'Hudson."⁷¹

No less important were the consequences for Vaudreuil. The home authorities had given their blessing to a policy of expansion; implementing it was the governor's responsibility. From having little scope for personal initiative before 1713, the control of North American imperialism was suddenly placed in his hands. The building of posts, the selection of commanding officers, the distribution of gifts to the allies, and all this implied from the point of view of relations with the Indians as well as with the English, became his sole responsibility. Under Vaudreuil's leadership began the second period of Canadian expansionism, which would irremediably commit the French to holding the interior against the English.

71. Instruction particulière pour M. de Vaudreuil sur la conduite qu'il doit tenir avec les Anglois, 1 avril 1755, AC, B, vol. 101, p. 166.

CHAPTER X

In Search of a Trading Policy

From the treaty of Utrecht until the death of Vaudreuil in 1725 the course of the fur trade was dominated and substantially altered by two important factors. It will be recalled that during the War of the Spanish Succession unfavorable market conditions had made it economically necessary to withdraw from the West. Then, after 1713, France initiated an imperialistic policy in the Mississippi valley. Although the motives for this decision were not primarily economic it nonetheless made considerable territorial expansion inevitable and brought new sources of beaver and menues pelleteries within the sphere of French influence. Had the beaver blight persisted, France might have found herself considerably embarrassed by the economic ramifications of her policy. By 1714, however, this crisis was all but over. With the metropolitan market manifesting signs of recovery, the economic basis of expansion, lacking since the early 1690's, was partly restored. It is in relation to this metropolitan demand and an enlarged zone of operation that the fur trade must now be examined.

In 1713, when Pontchartrain renewed his prohibition against the sale of brandy and stated that the congés were to remain abolished until 1718, the problem posed by the modalities of the beaver trade had apparently been disposed of for the immediate future.¹ Despite the air of finality with which the minister had

1. See above, p. 194.

spoken, Canada was not silenced. The new intendant, Michel Bégon, for one, was categorically opposed to the restrictions. A disciple of laissez-faire he proposed, soon after his arrival in 1712, a revolutionary trading programme based on complete freedom of trade. No limit should be placed on the number of congés issued every year so that anyone who wished to trade into the West would be free to do so. Under such a system more pelts would be sent to France and more trade goods would be available for distribution among the allies.² To Pontchartrain, who feared the grievous abuse that would grow out of such methods,³ Bégon replied that commerce in general must be free of all restraints. Since the merchant was the most competent to decide how his interests might best be served, he should enjoy full liberty to regulate his affairs as he saw fit. Furthermore, the number of traders would not be as great as might appear at first sight. As those who found the venture unprofitable withdrew, it would automatically adjust itself to fit the needs of the colony and would ultimately be no greater than that of the renegades who then roamed the West. Furthermore, if the principle of freedom of trade were accepted, these coureurs themselves would cease being outcasts and be available for service in time of war. At a time when the English were boasting of becoming masters of the West within two years, it was necessary for the French to be powerfully represented in those territories in order to keep abreast of English intrigue with the allies.⁴

2. Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 15 novembre 1713, AC, C 11 A, vol. 34, pp. 13 - 13v, p. 16.

3. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 19 mars 1714, AC, B, vol. 36, p. 339v.

4. Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 20 septembre 1714, AC, C 11 A, vol. 34, pp. 231 - 234v.

Interesting though it is, this memoir shows imperfect knowledge of American conditions and Pontchartrain was certainly right in seeing it as a potential source of grave disorders. Individual coureurs could perform useful service but the Fox war showed the bulk of them to be unreliable. Vaudreuil himself, who had signed these dispatches jointly with Bégon, contended in a private letter that he had only done so to avoid quarrelling with the intendant. The ideal solution from his point of view was to revive the twenty-five congés.⁵

Bégon's criticism of the forms of metropolitan control was more valid. While the colonial merchants were obtaining a paltry 34 sols per livre for their beaver he pointed out that pelts sold for as much as 120 sols in France. Because of such a price discrepancy it could be foreseen that attempts to smuggle beaver into France would increase. Abolishing the monopoly, he claimed, would solve the problem of contraband. Furthermore, once the beaver trade was decentralized, Canada would no longer depend on the solvability of a metropolitan association for its welfare.⁶

While the minister disapproved of Bégon's basic propositions he was still prepared to take other measures to strengthen the beaver trade. In 1713, the governor and intendant had reiterated that if the French manufacturers could not produce a good imitation of English stroud it would be necessary to have the commodity imported from England.⁷ In a striking departure from the dictates

5. Vaudreuil au ministre, 16 septembre 1714, Ibid., p. 286v.

6. Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 20 septembre 1714, Ibid., pp. 233v - 234.

7. Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 15 novembre 1713, Ibid., p. 10v.

of mercantilism, Pontchartrain, in March 1714, authorized Néret and Gayot to purchase three hundred pieces of stroud from England and send them to Canada. By the time this quantity was consumed the minister thought that the Languedoc manufactures would be producing a type superior to the English model.⁸ Néret and Gayot were also enacting measures to stem contraband. In 1713 they sent a shipment of trade goods to Canada, something which they had steadfastly refused to do for several years before.⁹ In 1714 it was announced that, effective immediately, the eight year ban on greasy beaver was being lifted. Henceforth this variety would be received on the same footing as dry pelts, at 34 sols per livre.¹⁰ La Nouiller, the associates' chief clerk in Canada, decided the price was too low and raised it to 40 sols.¹¹ Metropolitan interests were at last taking measures to secure New France's network of alliances and steer the allies away from the English.

This sudden change in attitude is not difficult to explain. In part it may have been due to the pro-colonial feelings that were quite widespread in France on the morrow of Utrecht. The basic cause, however, resides in the fact that the economic interests of France and those of Canada at last coincided, a condition which had not been met since the early 1690's. In 1714,

8. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 19 mars 1714, AC, B, vol. 36, p. 340.

9. Le ministre à Ramezay, 28 juin 1713, AC, B, vol. 35, pp. 291 - 291v.

10. Mémoire pour la compagnie de Castor du Canada, 26 avril 1714, AC, C 11 A, vol. 34, pp. 408 - 408v.

11. Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 20 septembre 1714, Ibid., p. 254.

France was faced with a shortage of beaver that was the more acute for having been unforeseen.

To supply the French hatmakers, Néret and Gayot relied upon the considerable stock of greasy beaver obtained from the Company of the Colony in 1706. Originally it was thought that this backlog would be exhausted by 1712. In that year, however, Néret and Gayot had decided that there was enough left to last six years more and they were authorized to go on refusing greasy beaver until 1718. Then, in 1714, when four hundred bales arrived from the Quebec stores, less than one hundred were found to contain saleable pelts. The balance, no doubt as a result of long years of storage, had completely deteriorated. A search for greasy beaver was immediately begun in France but not a single pelt was turned up. To fill the immediate needs of the hatmakers, ten thousand livres weight had to be imported from England.¹² The fact that France suddenly found herself with her beaver supply exhausted reflects rather poorly on the business methods of the associates.

As a cry for greasy beaver pelts went out from France, Canada found herself in a very unfavorable position to respond. The Fox war interfered with western communications while the loss of Hudson Bay had deprived the colony of its richest source of greasy pelts. In fact, because of these sudden market changes, which had not been foreseen in 1713 when the Bay was ceded to England, it had now become evident that something would have to be done to rebuild French positions in the Northwest. In November 1716, in order to broaden the basis of the fur trade, Vaudreuil and Bégon

12. Amelot au ministre, 18 août 1714, Ibid., pp. 403v - 404v.

suggested that it might be expedient to attempt the discovery of the Western Sea. As a first step in this direction, three posts would have to be founded: one at Kaministigoya, a second among the Crees and a third on lake Winnipeg. "Par le moyen de ces postes," wrote Vaudreuil and Bégon, "on détourneroit les sauvages de porter leurs pelleteries aux anglois, qui sont les plus belles du continent... à la baie d'Hudson, ce qui pourroit les obliger dans la suite d'abandonner ce poste, n'ayant d'autre commerce qu'avec les sauvages."¹³ At this early stage the expenses connected with the project could be borne by the commanding officers in return for an exclusive right to the trade of their posts. But as distances increased, trade would become impracticable and the enterprise would have to be subsidized by the State. The governor and intendant calculated that it would then require fifty men, preferably Canadians, and cost 50,000 livres.¹⁴ In June 1717, after discharging itself of all financial responsibility, the Council of the Marine authorized the project.¹⁵ In July, apparently before the arrival of the dispatches, Robustel de la Noue left with eight canoes to establish Kaministigoya.¹⁶

Because these developments still lay somewhat in the future in 1714 other measures were then necessary to stimulate production.

13. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 12 novembre 1716, AC, C 11 E, vol. 16, pp. 17 - 19v.

14. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 7 décembre 1717, Ibid., pp. 37 - 37v.

15. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 26 juin 1717, AC, B, vol. 39, p. 233v; that economic considerations were uppermost is indicated by the following notation of the Council: "Il est certain que ces postes empêcheroient plusieurs sauvages de porter leurs pelleteries à la Baie d'Hudson et par ce moyen les François en profiteroient." AC, C 11 E, vol. 16, p. 21.

16. Délibération du Conseil sur la découverte de la mer de l'ouest, 14 décembre 1717, AC, C 11 A, vol. 37, pp. 376 - 376v.

The la Rochelle merchants, who dominated the Canadian beaver trade, urged that the price for greasy pelts be raised to 70 sols par livre.¹⁷ Néret and Gayot agreed to increase it to 60 sols and accept up to forty thousand livres weight annually.¹⁸ They also succeeded in having the Quebec Superior Council stripped of its right to judge cases involving fraud. Apparently they feared that this body, which was dominated by mercantile interests, might itself have a stake in contraband. Henceforth, the power to judge such cases was vested in the intendant alone.¹⁹ But all these measures might well remain half-measures unless Pontchartrain agreed to revise his stand on the congés. Indeed, with the future of the hatmaking industry hanging in the balance, the minister now had little choice in the matter and in July 1715 the King's Memoir announced the momentous decision. But the terms on which the congés were revived indicate clearly that the minister had not overcome his deep misgivings for the system.

It was made clear to Ramezay and Bégon that the congés were being revived on a trial basis. Only fifteen were to be granted the first year and the success of the experiment would decide whether or not to increase their number in the future. The congé holders, moreover, would not be free to travel where they wished.

17. Le ministre à Néret et Gayot, 3 avril 1715, AC, B, vol. 37, pp. 64v - 65.

18. Le ministre à Ramezay, 30 avril 1715, Ibid., pp. 162 - 162v.

19. Le ministre à Bégon, 10 juillet 1715, Ibid., p. 170; Arrest qui attribue à l'intendant de Canada la connoissance des procez concernant les contraventions tant sur les castors que sur les marchandises et effets venant des colonies angloises, 6 mai 1715, AC, C 11 G, vol. 8, p. 88.

The only tribe they might visit were the Sioux, to prevent them from taking their trade to Hudson Bay. Otherwise they were obliged to carry out their commerce at the posts of Detroit, Michilimackinac and St. Louis des Illinois under the supervision of the commanding officers. Not only would this prevent debauchery but it would also keep the French from competing with the middlemen tribes such as the Ottawas, Miamis and Illinois. This stipulation may well have been due to Vaudreuil who was then at court and had seen how the system operated under Frontenac. The absolute liberty the beneficiaries then enjoyed had brought them into competition with the Indian allies and seriously indisposed them toward the French.²⁰ Preventing such a development was all the more important at a time when the English were intensifying their efforts to win over the western tribes.²¹

Other conditions attached to the exercise of the congés, however, were distinctly less favorable. Vaudreuil and Bégon had often pointed out that the abolition of the brandy trade had placed the French at a disadvantage in dealing with the Indians. In their quest for alcohol several of the allies were going to Albany where restrictions were non-existent. In fact the English appear to have been using the allies to introduce rum into the west on their behalf. The only way of overcoming this handicap was to allow the French to barter limited quantities to the Indians.²² In

20. W.J. Eccles, Frontenac, the Courtier Governor, p. 261.

21. Mémoire du Roy à Ramezay et Bégon, 10 juillet 1715, AC, B, vol. 37, pp. 178 - 179. This important document is also reproduced in AC, F 3, vol. 9, pp. 308 - 309.

22. Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 20 septembre 1714, AC, C 11 A, vol. 34, pp. 235 - 236v.

replying, Pontchartrain acknowledged the existence of "fortes raisons qui demandent que ces défenses soient levées." The king, however, could not forget the sad experiences of the past and for the time being the prohibition must remain in force.²³

The new congé system also featured important innovations in the method of selecting the beneficiaries. Until 1696, the choice had always rested with the governor, and the intendant's role was limited to countersigning the permits. The congés themselves were free. In 1715, it was decreed that the governor and intendant, acting jointly, should sell them to the highest bidders. Although this decision can be explained, at least in part, by the deplorable state of the ministry's finances it nonetheless presented several inconveniences. Once the congés were put up for sale, the possibility of selecting the most suitable candidates would be lost. The purchasers themselves would almost certainly attempt to recoup the cost of their permits by raising the price of their trade goods.²⁴ No less important was the loss this represented from the point of view of governmental patronage. "C'est l'unique grace qu'il [the governor] peut répandre parmi les peuples qu'il gouverne," Vaudreuil complained, "l'intendant est le maître de tout

23. Mémoire du Roy à Ramezay et Bégon, 10 juillet 1715, AC, B, vol. 37, p. 180.

24. A S.A.S. Mgr. le comte de Toulouse, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 36, pp. 142 - 146.

le reste."²⁵ For all these reasons Vaudreuil urged that the congés be distributed in the traditional way.

Although the beaver drought was the principal reason behind the change in ministerial policy, Pontchartrain's about-face may nonetheless have been interpreted as a victory for the governor and the intendant and as a defeat for the Jesuits who had been steadfast in their opposition to the system. After Pontchartrain's replacement by the Council of the Marine in September 1715 both sides attempted to press their point of view upon the new body. Its decision on this matter would be doubly important since Pontchartrain's new western policy had as yet produced no practical effects. The recurrence of the Fox war had made it necessary to send military expeditions into the West and obliged Ramezay and Bégon to postpone for the time being the revival of the congés.²⁶ In preparation for the day when circumstances would be more favorable Vaudreuil, Bégon and Ramezay sought to have the number of these trading permits increased from fifteen to twenty five and the restrictions on brandy abolished. It was contended that fifteen did not keep enough Canadians occupied and could not inject sufficient trade goods into the west to satisfy

25. Ibid., p. 119; Riverin maintained that patronage was the foremost consideration in this whole question. "L'avidité de M. de Vaudreuil joint à l'ambition de son épouse qui ne reste en France que pour soutenir cette entreprise sont la cause unique de ce rétablissement que l'on ne verra en Canada qu'avec indignation si ce n'est de la part de leurs partisans qui sont bien assurés d'y participer." Riverin au Conseil de la Marine, 31 juillet 1716, Ibid., pp. 308v - 309.

26. Ramezay et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 7 novembre 1715, AC, C 11 A, vol. 35, pp. 19v - 20.

the needs of the allies.²⁷ The Jesuits, for their part, tried to hedge the system with enough restrictions to minimize the possibility of disorder. They argued that cheaper trade goods, not alcohol, attracted the Indians to the English. Brandy was readily available in Montreal but it did not prevent the Indians from the outlying missions from going to Albany. The traffic in alcohol, however, threatened to undermine the religious tie which was the principal force keeping the Indians in the French interest. For that reason it should be absolutely forbidden.²⁸ Father Germain, the superior of the Jesuits, agreed that the congés could be useful once the beneficiaries were reconciled to the idea of not trading brandy to the Indians. But if the governor and intendant were unable or unwilling to enforce this rule then the congés themselves must be abolished.²⁹

This divergence of opinion between Church and State, which bore on a fundamental issue, was not attended by any of the bitterness which had envenomed previous clashes between the civil and the religious estate in New France. The Jesuits were visibly satisfied with the character of Vaudreuil's administration and always maintained friendly relations with him. On a number of occasions

27. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 31 mars 1716, AM, B 1, vol. 8, pp. 283v - 284v. Avis de Ramezay et Bégon en marge.

28. Les Jésuites missionnaires du Canada au Conseil de la Marine, s.d., Ibid., pp. 270v - 271v.

29. Le père Germain, supérieur à Québec, au Conseil de la Marine, s.d., Ibid., pp. 282v - 283v.

they thanked him for facilitating their work among the Indians.³⁰ This indicates that the abuses which occurred under his rule were far less serious than those of the Frontenac era. The governor himself was naturally inclined to conciliation and too well aware of the important role played by the Jesuits among the Indians to hinder their work. In 1717 and again in 1724 he underlined the importance of having missionaries of this order on duty at all the posts.³¹ His antipathy toward the brandy trade was also well known. He had been the one principally responsible for its interdiction in 1702 and, in 1716, he still maintained that "quand les sauvages sont ivres c'est un enfer ouvert."³² Nonetheless, a moderate trade in this commodity was essential and in this respect he made three suggestions. Each Indian who came to trade in the colony should be entitled to two or three jugs of brandy, the sale of this commodity should be authorized at Fort Frontenac and the canoes proceeding up country should be allowed eight or

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30. La défense expresse de la traite de l'eau de vie aux sauvages, les autres désordres que vous taschez d'abolir, la seureté et la tranquillité... que vous nous procurez parmi ces sauvages... tout cela mérite bien qu'un missionnaire... vous en marque sa reconnaissance." Extrait de la lettre écrite à Vaudreuil par le père Chardon, religieux missionnaire de la compagnie de Jésus à la rivière St-Joseph aux Miamis, 18 octobre 1705, AC, F 5 A, vol. 3, pp. 168 - 168v; also, lettre du RP. Marest, missionnaire à Missilimackina à M. de Vaudreuil, 21 juin 1712, AC, C 11 A, vol. 33, p. 71v. In this letter Marest thanks the governor for "le zel que vous avez pour favoriser la religion et ceux qui travaillent à l'étendre."; also, Copie d'une lettre du RP Marest à M. le Gouverneur, 2 août 1713, AC, C 11 A, vol. 34, p. 76.
31. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 20 octobre 1717, AM, B 1, vol. 9, pp. 4 - 4v; Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 octobre 1724, AC, C 11 A, vol. 46, p. 84v.
32. Les Jésuites missionnaires du Canada au Conseil de la Marine, s.d., AM, B 1, vol. 8, pp. 270v - 271v. Note du Conseil.

ten for sale at the posts.³³

The problem posed by the congés and brandy traffic, therefore, were among the first the Council of the Marine had to deal with after taking office. Its members knew little about Canada - the minutes of their deliberations show that the location and importance of the Indian tribes and even the geography of the country had to be explained to them - and they relied heavily upon Vaudreuil for advice. Such a situation, it need hardly be said, was of enormous advantage to the governor. He appears to have rarely missed a sitting of the Council and succeeded in having most of his recommendations adopted. Denis Riverin, who had lost his position as colonial agent and had become a bitter enemy of Vaudreuil, realized what was taking place and attempted to destroy the governor's credit by claiming that all his demands were motivated by personal ambition.³⁴ In part he may well have been right but he failed to make any impression on the members of the Council. Vaudreuil had practically gained sovereign authority in the matter of the posts and the Council also acceded to his request where the congés were concerned. Their number was increased to twenty-five; the principle of sale, innovated by Pontchartrain, was abolished, and the choice of beneficiaries was placed in the hands of the governor.³⁵ But where alcohol was

33. A S.A.S. Mgr. le comte de Toulouse, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 36, p. 119v. Les Jésuites missionnaires du Canada au Conseil de la Marine, s.d., AM, B 1, vol. 8, pp. 270v - 271v.

34. Riverin au Comte de Toulouse, 9 avril 1716, AC, C 11 A, vol. 36, pp. 315 - 316v; Riverin au Conseil de Marine, 31 juillet 1716, Ibid., pp. 308 - 309.

35. Délibération du Conseil de Marine, avril 1716, Ibid., pp. 246v - 247; Déclaration du Roy portant rétablissement des 25 congés pour aller faire la traite avec les sauvages dans les postes marqués par ces permissions, 28 avril 1716, AC, F 3, vol. 9, pp. 356 - 357.

concerned, the Council had to take Jesuit pressure into account. The only concession Vaudreuil won here was to have the sale of brandy authorized at Fort Frontenac. It was forbidden everywhere else although each canoeman was allowed four jugs for personal consumption.³⁶

Although the vexing issue of the congés had at last been resolved the Canadian beaver trade was faced with other serious difficulties. The contract with Néret and Gayot was due to expire on January 1, 1718. It was now urgent to decide whether a monopoly should be maintained after that date or if the Canadians should be granted direct access to the French market. Whatever the decision of the Council might be it was evident that the privilege could no longer be continued in the hands of Néret and Gayot, the surviving partners of the association formed in 1706. These men had rendered Canada a signal service by liquidating the enormous debt contracted by the Company of the Colony, but the effort had left them financially exhausted. When Aubert died in 1711, Néret and Gayot, in order to replenish their depleted resources, had been obliged to subrogate du Moulin and Mercier and then Cadet in the rights of the deceased.³⁷ When the latter withdrew his support, the bills of exchange drawn from Canada went unpaid. The two la Rochelle merchants who held most of this worthless paper decided to compensate themselves by seizing all the beaver coming

36. Délibération du Conseil de la Marine, s.d., AM, B 1, vol. 8, p. 280v; avis en marge; Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 15 juin 1716, AC, B, vol. 38, pp. 223 - 223v.

37. Mémoire des habitants de la colonie à l'intendant, 9 octobre 1716, AC, C 11 A, vol. 36, pp. 288 - 291v.

from the colony.³⁸ The plight of Canada was all the more exasperating in view of the sudden beaver boom. Bound by contract to a bankrupt partnership the Canadian merchants could reap no benefit from metropolitan prices which ranged as high as 110 sols for greasy pelts and 70 for dry. Thus, while the Paris hat-makers assailed the associates for not having foreseen the drought which had disorganized their industry,³⁹ the Canadians began clamouring for freedom of trade.

The colonial campaign was spearheaded by Michel Bégon. Canada, he contended, was now sufficiently well developed to dispense with a company and carry on its trade independently.⁴⁰ The Council of the Marine was strongly impressed by this argument and announced in June 1716 that liberty of trade was to become effective as soon as the present contract expired.⁴¹ It was now, however, that opposition began to form as various individuals realized that, despite the sudden beaver boom, the golden days of the seventeenth century were gone forever. Benoist Collêt, the attorney general of the sovereign council, was the principal exponent of this thesis. Although economic conditions were presently favorable he pointed out that the beaver industry consumed

38. Loc. cit.

39. Délibération faite au bureau du corps des maitres chapeliers de Paris, janvier 1715, AC, C 11 A, vol. 35, pp. 280 - 280v.

40. "Ce pays est assez établi pour que les négociants et habitants puissent par eux-mêmes et par les correspondants qu'ils ont en France étendre leur commerce et le faire avec plus de succès que ne pourroit faire une compagnie." Mémoire sur la nécessité de laisser aux négociants du Canada la liberté du commerce du castor, s.d., Ibid., p. 314.

41. Le Conseil de la Marine à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 16 juin 1716, AC, B, vol. 38, p. 208.

considerably less pelts than formerly. His estimate of an annual consumption of 50,000 or 60,000 livres weight⁴², however, was too low. The Paris hatmakers, who were hoping to succeed Néret and Gayot, were offering to accept 40,000 livres weight of greasy and 60,000 of dry.⁴³ In either case, a considerable surplus would remain and since the Canadians lacked the necessary connections to channel it off in Holland and Muscovy, they would have to fall back on contraband. In fact Collat declared that those who were clamouring for freedom were precisely the persons who wanted to further this illicit trade. His own solution was to form a new company that would pay for beaver at a reasonable rate, within a year of presentation of the bills of exchange and, generally speaking, be strong enough to gain the confidence of the population.⁴⁴ The Council of the Marine now abruptly reversed its stand. One year after declaring itself in favour of an open market it pronounced the beaver trade annexed to the operations of the Company of the Occident for a period of twenty-five years.⁴⁵

By and large, the association thus begun between Canada and John Law favorably affected the fortunes of the colony. The Canadians bills of exchange, instead of being drawn on the broken

42. Mémoire pour prouver que la liberté du commerce du castor... est très préjudiciable à ce commerce... et que l'établissement d'une nouvelle compagnie y est très avantageux. AC, C 11 A, vol. 37, p. 408.

43. Les chapeliers de Paris au Conseil de la Marine, 10 avril 1717, AM, B 1, vol. 19, pp. 356 - 358v.

44. Mémoire pour prouver que la liberté du commerce du castor... est très préjudiciable à ce commerce... et que l'établissement d'une nouvelle compagnie y est très avantageux, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 37, pp. 408 - 412v.

45. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon au sujet du castor, s.d., AC, B, vol. 39, p. 247v.

resources of Néret and Gayot, now tapped the enormous credit of the Banque générale. This made it possible to pay half the value of the bills of exchange within six months and the balance one year after presentation. Although this was a marked improvement over Néret and Gayot, under whom the operation required two years it still did not match the rapidity of transactions at Albany where merchants were paid in full six weeks or two months after selling their beaver.⁴⁶ The contract of 1706 had also specified that annual beaver receipts should not exceed 110,000 livres weight. The Company of the Occident, on the other hand was obliged to accept all the beaver the Canadians brought to its stores.⁴⁷ The ministry itself reserved the right to determine the price. It was on these last two points that problems soon developed.

Before fixing the prices, the Council of the Marine had sought the advice of Vaudreuil and Bégon who had already summoned an assembly of Canadian notables to discuss the subject. In order to raise the production of greasy beaver which was almost down to zero as a result of the long interdict, the colonial administrators suggested that this variety be paid 80 sols per livre during the first two years of the Company's lease and 70 sols thereafter. It was also necessary to make the marketing of dry beaver as unattractive as possible since Néret and Gayot's

46. Ramezay et Bégon au ministre, 7 novembre 1715, AC, C 11 A, vol. 35, p. 31.

47. Lettres patentes... portant établissement d'une compagnie de commerce sous le nom de Compagnie d'Occident, donné à Paris au mois d'août 1717, AE, Mémoires et documents Amérique, vol. 6, pp. 204v - 205.

economic policy had resulted in a considerable backlog of this type of pelt. The price should therefore be fixed at 30 sols for two years and raised to 40 sols beginning in 1720. By paying these prices on an annual production estimated at 160,000 livres weight, the company would show a net profit of 184,996 livres value.⁴⁸

The company disagreed with the suggested prices on the grounds that reducing the value of beaver after two years would have an adverse effect on the Indians. Nor did it derive any great satisfaction from Vaudreuil and Bégon's other recommendations and calculations. Since France and Holland jointly consumed approximately 100,000 livres⁴⁹ weight annually an annual production of 160,000 livres would mean an unmarketable surplus of 60,000 livres. In fact, this surplus might even be greater since it had lately been decided to restrict exportations to Holland in an effort to create a drought in that country and place the French hatmakers in a better competitive position. While France and the company were struggling with these problems receipts had almost doubled in 1716 and 1717 "à cause de la quantité de personnes qui sont montés dans la profondeur des bois."⁵⁰ To cope with a situation which might soon get completely out of hand the company made two

48. Mémoire des négociants du Canada sur la nouvelle compagnie de castor, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 37, pp. 351 - 353.

49. In 1716 it was estimated that France consumed 72,000 livres and Holland 30,000. Nouvelle régie des castors par la colonie même tirée des consommations annuelles, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 36, p. 349.

50. These persons were apparently the volunteers who had agreed to participate in the campaign against the Fox Indians in return for trading permits. See below, chapter XII.

counterproposals. Instead of being obliged to accept the total beaver production the company's responsibility should be limited to 40,000 livres weight of greasy and 80,000 of dry annually. Furthermore, to keep Canada itself within these limits positively no one but the bearers of congés should be allowed to proceed up-country.⁵¹ The fact that the Jesuits chose this moment to renew their complaints made the present system all the more untenable. A letter from father Lafitau, missionary at Caughnawaga, indicated that the quantities of brandy traded to the Indians exceeded by far those legally prescribed with the result that the work of the missionaries among the natives was gravely compromised.⁵²

After these new complaints had been tabled, it must have become evident to all concerned that the economic, diplomatic and moral ramifications of the beaver trade could never be successfully harmonized. Nonetheless, a new attempt had to be made at finding a modus vivendi. The Council of the Marine could do either of two things. It might follow the company's suggestion and limit the beaver production while letting the congés subsist. Or alternately it might oblige the company to abide by the terms of its letters patent while abolishing the congés to restrict production. Since the first solution could only lead to an enormous increase in contraband the home authorities had to fall back upon the second course of action. In July, 1718, Vaudreuil and

51. Observations de la compagnie d'Occident sur l'extrait d'un mémoire envoyé de Canada... s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 39, pp. 304v - 313.

52. Délibération du Conseil de la Marine sur une lettre du RP Lafitau, 1 juin 1718, AC, C 11 A, vol. 39, pp. 242 - 246v.

Bégon were advised that because of abuses in the brandy trade⁵³ and also because the number of trading permits distributed had exceeded by far the authorized number of twenty-five, the congés were being abolished effective in 1720. The brandy trade itself was immediately forbidden and the interdict was even extended to the four jugs each canoeman had been allowed.⁵⁴ Because contrary winds forced the storeship l'Eléphant to turn back, this dispatch did not reach Canada before 1719 and in consideration of this delay a one year extension was granted on the congés. Vaudreuil was expressly forbidden to give any other permissions.⁵⁵

The latest move against the congés created some discontent in the colony⁵⁶ but nothing remotely resembling the storm of protest caused by the edict of 1696. The reason for this changed attitude is not difficult to ascertain. During the earlier period the congés constituted the basis of both the beaver trade and Indian diplomacy. In 1720 this was no longer the case and the court's complaint against the large number of traders provides an indication of this. By that date, as a result of the expansionist policy decided upon in 1713 and 1714, several garrisoned posts had

53. In 1719 the Council stated that it was on the strength of La-fitau's complaints alone that the congés had been abolished. Délibération du Conseil de la Marine sur une lettre de Vaudreuil et Bégon, 26 octobre 1719, AC, C 11 A, vol. 41, p. 78v.

54. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 5 juillet 1718, AC, B, vol. 40, p. 469v.

55. "Tous ceux qui monteront dans les pays d'en haut ne peuvent y aller sans ces congés et Sa Majesté leur défend de donner aucune autre permission sous quelque prétexte que ce soit." Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 23 mai 1719, AC, B, vol. 41, pp. 520v - 521.

56. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 26 octobre 1719, AC, C 11 A, vol. 40, p. 54.

sprung up throughout the West and it was around these establishments that the fur trade now centered.⁵⁷ These settlements drew numerous voyageurs into the Upper country. Simply keeping the posts supplied, for instance, required several canoes. Vaudreuil himself stated that the commanding officers were entitled to two annually and their subordinates to one.⁵⁸ While travelling to and from the posts, the crews must have carried out a sizeable trade with the Indians although they were forbidden to do so.⁵⁹ More important still, the merchants were eager to share in the economic fruits of expansion, and the number of engagés they sent into the West increased enormously after 1715. In 1724, for example, no less than 114 canoes, exclusive of those carrying supplies, left Montreal for the Upper country.⁶⁰ Like the supply convoys, this category of traders fell outside the sphere of the congés, but unlike the former, they were not authorized by the court. They must therefore have operated in liaison with the

57. The following posts had been founded by 1723 or 1725. The name of the commanding officer appears in brackets. Détroit (Tonty), Miamis and Ouyatanons (both under du Buisson), Rivière St. Joseph (Villedonné), Michilimackinac (de Lignery), la Baye (Amariton), Camanestigouya (Deschaillons), Chagouamigon (de Lincôt), fort Frontenac (Noyan), Niagara and bottom of the lake (both apparently under Joncaire) *Estat des soldats détachés dans les postes outaouacs vers 1723 et 1725*, AC, C 11 E, vol. 13, p. 140.

58. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 11 novembre 1718, AC, C 11 A, vol. 39, p. 112v.

59. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 2 juin 1720, AC, B, vol. 42, p. 426v.

60. The number of permits issued for the Upper Country provides an illuminating commentary on the enormous development of the West between 1715 and 1725. Before 1715 almost all the permits were drawn on Detroit. 1703, 14 permits; 1704, 12; 1705, 2; 1706, 10; 1707, 11; 1708, 10; 1709, 2; 1710, 11; 1711, nil; 1712, 19; 1713, 26; 1714, 10; 1715, 45; 1716, 45; 1717, 55; 1718, 76; 1719, 42; 1720, 51; 1721, 57; 1722, 64; 1723, 72; 1724, 114; 1725, 76. *Répertoire des engagements pour l'ouest conservé dans les archives judiciaires de Montréal*, RAPQ 1929 - 1930, pp. 207 - 250.

commanders and on a license issued by the governor.⁶¹ As a result of these developments the congés had plainly lost all of their economic and political importance by the early 1720's. The only ones who appear to have suffered from their abolition were the poor families who had derived an income from their sale.⁶²

Once the congés had been abolished it was the Council's intention that the fur trade be carried out within the colony or at Fort Frontenac, the bottom of the lake, and Niagara, the three royal posts situated on lake Ontario.⁶³ It was forbidden at Michilimackinac and apparently at all the other posts which were not proprietary.⁶⁴ These orders had little effect and the minister

61. These were undoubtedly the forbidden permissions which the Court referred to. Vaudreuil implicitly admitted their existence in 1719 when he stated that "[il] ne donnera que les vingt cinq congés qu'il lui est permis de distribuer l'année prochaine." Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 26 octobre 1719, AC, C 11 A, vol. 40, p. 41. In 1720 he assured that "[il] se conformera à la défense que Sa Majesté fait de donner aucun congé ni permission." Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 26 octobre 1720, AC, C 11 A, vol. 42, p. 14v. By 1723, the court had become aware that, despite Vaudreuil's assurances to the contrary, permissions were still being issued. "On dit publiquement," it was noted, "que pour 400 livres on a des permissions en Canada." Vaudreuil au ministre, 11 octobre 1723, AC, C 11 A, vol. 45, p. 155v. Cadwallader Colden, for his part, stated that "I am well assured that [the merchants] commonly give 600 or 700 livres for a license for one canoe... to go with her loading into the Indian country to trade." Mr. Colden's memoir on the fur trade, 10 novembre 1724, NYCD, vol. 5, p. 729.

62. L'évêque de Québec au Conseil de la Marine, 18 octobre 1720, AC, C 11 A, vol. 43, pp. 206 - 207.

63. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 2 juin 1720, AC, B, vol. 42, p. 426.

64. Mémoire du Roy pour servir d'instruction au sr. Chazel, intendant de la Nouvelle France, 8 mai 1725, AC, B, vol. 48, p. 760. The only posts which can definitely be put down as proprietary at this time are Detroit and Kaministigoya. The status of the others, outside of the ones on lake Ontario, is uncertain.

Maurepas acknowledged as much in 1725 when he angrily informed Vaudreuil that he knew very well that "les commandans françois dans les postes y font le métier de traiteurs, qu'ils vendent leurs marchandises à des prix exorbitants... et ils ne se cachent point qu'ils ne recherchent ces postes que pour avoir occasion d'y faire leurs aff'res."⁶⁵ By that date the court had practically given up on the idea of restricting the fur trade and was searching for a new system which would recognize the existing situation and also make it profitable to the treasury. In June 1725 Bégon had suggested that the posts be farmed out to the commanding officers⁶⁶ and Maurepas had passed on this suggestion to the new intendant, Chazel.⁶⁷ The idea soon gained court approval and became the new basis of France's western policy. In fact, if la Galissonnière is to be believed, Vaudreuil had begun farming out the posts during the last years of his administration.⁶⁸ Considering the absolute authority he enjoyed in this domain he was certainly in a good position to do so.

Despite the development of this enormous empire between 1713 and 1725, the ties binding the West to Canada were not secure. The colony was plagued by inadequate trade goods and a low level of beaver consumption which may, however, have been partly offset

65. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 11 août 1725, AC, B, vol. 48, p. 906.

66. Bégon au ministre, 10 juin 1725, AC, C 11 A, vol. 47, pp. 206, 219v - 220.

67. Le ministre à Chazel, 11 août 1725, AC, B, vol. 48, pp. 893 - 894.

68. La Galissonnière au ministre, 23 octobre 1748, AC, C 11 A, vol. 91, pp. 231 - 231v.

by the growing popularity of menues pelleteries.⁶⁹ The suppression of the brandy traffic may also have had an adverse effect on French commerce. Although the prohibitions did not put a stop to the trade which continued throughout the west and in the colony itself⁷⁰ it nonetheless made it impossible to develop a positive policy in this domain. In 1721, when the Indians arrived in Montreal to trade their pelts, Vaudreuil refused to give them brandy.⁷¹ This rebuff probably did not prevent them from obtaining it elsewhere, but the governor's attitude may nonetheless have indisposed them toward the French. Finally, in 1724, with the prohibition still in force, the governor distributed small quantities to the Indians. "La facilité qu'ils ont de trouver de cette boisson chez les Anglois qui mettent tout en oeuvre pour les attirer ne me permèt pas de leur en ôter absolument l'usage."⁷² Maurepas approved of the governor's initiative and in May 1726 he authorized Beauharnois to continue the same policy.⁷³ He also asked the new

69. The statements on the trade of Fort Frontenac, Niagara and Toronto often show receipts of menues pelleteries exceeding those of beaver by as much as two to one. See *Estat des pelleteries de la traite faite au fort Frontenac à Niagara et dans le fond du lac Ontario pendant l'année 1721*, AC, C 11 A, vol. 44, pp. 223 - 223v; same for 1722 and 1723, AC, C 11 A, vol. 45, pp. 285 - 286.

70. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 3 novembre 1721, AC, C 11 A, vol. 44, p. 169; *Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Robert*, 30 mai 1724, AC, B, vol. 47, p. 1140.

71. *Délibération du Conseil de la Marine sur une lettre de Vaudreuil et Bégon*, 19 décembre 1721, AC, C 11 A, vol. 43, pp. 398 - 398v.

72. Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 octobre 1724, AC, C 11 A, vol. 46, p. 83.

73. *Le ministre à Vaudreuil*, 15 mai 1725, AC, B, vol. 48, pp. 765 - 766; *Mémoire du Roy à Beauharnois et Dupuy*, 14 mai 1726, AC, B, vol. 49, p. 659v.

governor to summon Longueuil, the new intendant Dupuy, the Jesuits and the Canadian notables to an assembly where the question of brandy might be discussed in detail.⁷⁴ The outcome was important. Father la Chasse, the Jesuit representative, agreed that the use of brandy in the beaver trade was necessary to help preserve the hegemony of both France and Catholicism in America. For should the English ever expel the French, both would be destroyed.⁷⁵ The sudden change in the traditional attitude of the Jesuits came none too soon. The English, and especially New York, had been steadily increasing their pressure on the West during this period and winning a growing share of the western trade.⁷⁶

In the field of trade goods the French were well aware of their inferiority and made a serious attempt to remedy this weakness. In 1714, while the Languedoc manufacturers were attempting to improve the quality of their stroud, the minister had authorized the importation of three hundred pieces from England. In 1715, he decided that the French article was sufficiently perfected to withstand successfully English competition. Importation from England was halted and two hundred and sixteen pieces were shipped to the colony from Montpellier.⁷⁷ At first, reports from Canada were favorable. Bégon even stated that the Indians

74. Loc. cit.

75. Beauharnois et Dupuis au ministre, 10 mars 1727, AC, C 11 A, vol. 49, p. 561.

76. See below, chapter XI.

77. Ramezay et Bégon au ministre, 7 novembre 1715, AC, C 11 A, vol. 35, p. 30.

preferred them to those of the English.⁷⁸ Then, the following year, he admitted his mistake. The weaving was inferior, the colour patterns did not please the Indians, the dyes were too weak and the prices too high.⁷⁹ Once more the French were obliged to fall back on English importations.⁸⁰ Indeed, this expedient became a necessity in 1722 when an epidemic ravaged Languedoc and disorganized the local industries. Importing from England, however, was an expensive process and few inroads could be made on contraband as long as trade goods could be conveniently obtained from Albany. Despite edicts forbidding this trade and the posting of guards on lake Champlain,⁸¹ commerce between Canada and Albany continued at a brisk pace.⁸²

The beaver trade also suffered from the inflation precipitated in France by Law's système. In 1720 the la Rochelle merchants complained that the price of trade goods had doubled and in some cases tripled over the past year. The price of beaver, however, had remained stationary so that the Indians now received considerably less merchandise for their pelts. To cope with the situation the merchants urged that the Company of the Occident either double

78. Mémoire sur les écarlatines, s.d., Ibid., p. 189.

79. Réponces aux propositions du député du commerce de Languedoc sur les écarlatines, 9 octobre 1716, AC, C 11 A, vol. 36, pp. 151 - 153; Mémoire de Bégon sur les écarlatines, 6 novembre 1717, AM, B 1, vol. 29, pp. 27v - 30v.

80. Conseil de la marine à Vallier, 25 janvier 1717, AC, B, vol. 39, p. 189.

81. Arrêt concernant les fraudes de castor et la vente des marchandises étrangères, 4 juin 1719, AC, B, vol. 41, pp. 550v - 552v. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 26 octobre 1719, AC, C 11 A, vol. 40, pp. 61 - 61v.

82. Colden estimated at 900 the number of pieces of stroud smuggled into Canada in a single year. NYCD, vol. 5, p. 729.

its prices or consent to freedom of trade.⁸³ Although the Canadians, who now apparently began to fear the competition of an open market, were in favour of maintaining the monopoly,⁸⁴ the Council of the Marine bowed to la Rochelle pressure and announced, in May 1720, that trade would be free.⁸⁵ In place of the monopoly, however, an exorbitant tariff of 9 sols per livre on greasy pelts and 6 on dry was established in favour of the Company. Furthermore the merchants were obliged to sell all their pelts in France although this practically left them at the mercy of the hatmakers.⁸⁶ This was almost the same as taking away with one hand what was given with the other so that Vaudreuil and Bégon felt compelled to protest on behalf of the Canadian merchant community. They asked that the duty be reduced to a uniform 5 sols per livre or, better still, abolished completely. The merchants should also be authorized to sell at least their dry pelts in Holland.⁸⁷ Instead of meeting these demands, the Council of the Marine, in May 1721, abruptly decided to revive the monopoly.⁸⁸ It was now the turn of the la Rochelle group to emit furious protests. As soon as they had been told that trade was free these merchants had instructed their Canadian correspondents to pay the Indians forty

83. Requête présentée à S.A.S. Mgr. le comte de Toulouse, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 41, p. 229v.

84. Délibération du Conseil sur une dépêche du sr. Lotbinière, conseiller au Conseil supérieur et agent de la Compagnie des Indes, 25 octobre 1720, AC, C 11 A, vol. 43, p. 234.

85. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 6 novembre 1720, AC, C 11 A, vol. 42, p. 123.

86. Mémoire sur la liberté du castor accordée aux habitants du Canada..., 6 novembre 1720, AC, C 11 A, vol. 42, pp. 137 - 145.

87. Loc. cit.

88. Le Conseil de la Marine à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 20 juin 1721, AC, B, vol. 44, p. 534v.

five sols for their dry pelts and as much as ninety for their greasy.⁸⁹ In Albany, at the same period, both varieties were valued at approximately three shillings sterling per pound weight.⁹⁰ Although badly outpriced on dry pelts, Canada was finally in a position to match the prices offered by New York for greasy beaver. This advantageous situation was unfortunately shortlived, for all the la Rochelle merchants were able to gain was to have the revival of the monopoly delayed until January 1722.⁹¹ The company, however, was now obliged to pay 80 sols for greasy pelts and 40 for dry.⁹² Such was the situation in 1725.

Between 1713 and 1725, New France had slowly recovered from the disastrous depression of the early eighteenth century. The slowness of this process must first of all be imputed to the dwindling popularity of beaver, the colony's chief export staple. But it is also connected with the activities of the various groups which had a stake in American colonization: the Jesuits, the Company of the Occident and its successor, the Company of the Indies, the Paris hatmakers, the la Rochelle merchants and their Canadian counterparts. Each sought to impose its point of view on the Council of the Marine, often in disregard of colonial interests. The Council, largely because it appears to have lacked experience,

89. Mémoire concernant la collonie de Canada et le commerce des castors, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 43, pp. 220 - 221.

90. Mr. Colden's Memoir on the Fur Trade, November 10, 1724, NYCD, vol. 5, p. 733. According to the rates of exchange of that period one shilling was the equivalent of one livre tournois.

91. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 17 octobre 1722, AC, C 11 A, vol. 44, p. 273.

92. Loc. cit.

perhaps also because Louis XIV's system was beginning to crack, yielded to one and then to another. Despite undoubtedly good intentions it almost appears to have abdicated into the hands of pressure groups the conduct of Canadian affairs.

Another and still more fundamental conclusion emerges from a study of the beaver trade during this period. Despite the economic upswing of both France and New France, the colony was as incapable as ever of dispensing with Albany. The prices available on that market for dry beaver were far more attractive than those offered by the Companies of the Occident and the Indies and the merchants were paid off in a matter of weeks instead of having to wait a year as was the case when dealing with the French corporations. Furthermore, despite an intense effort, the manufacturers of France had been unable to produce a good quality of stroud. The resultant situation was full of dangerous implications. Since the French North American empire could only function economically by drawing heavily upon the resources of Albany, withdrawal of those facilities would almost certainly cause the entire structure to capsize. The governors of New York were aware of this and, after 1713, a far more aggressive western policy went hand in hand with attempts to break off all correspondence with the French. It is the resultant struggle between Canada and New York for control of the western alliance and the western trade that must now be studied.

CHAPTER XI

The Struggle for the Lakes

How the Iroquois barrier was abolished by the treaty of Utrecht has been explained in a previous chapter. The immediate and long range consequences which grew out of this event are among the more momentous in the history of New France. Beyond the Confederacy lay the Great Lakes country, peopled by the historic allies of the French colony. Before 1701, the fierce obstruction of the Iroquois had diverted them from Albany and also prevented New York from expanding beyond the Alleghanies. During the War of the Spanish Succession, however, the Iroquois had relented somewhat. For the sake of securing their western flank they had granted the Upper tribes a limited access to the Albany market. Then, after the treaty of Utrecht, no obstacle was left to hinder New York's westward expansion or its intercourse with the western Indians. Suddenly, the latter found themselves free to swing both their commerce and their allegiance to the English. How to prevent such a disastrous occurrence was the great problem facing Vaudreuil during the second half of his administration.

To appreciate the full significance of the shattered Iroquois barrier, the extent to which the French had relied upon it to prevent New York's westward expansion before 1713 must first be understood. When d'Aigremont urged that Detroit be abandoned, for instance, he argued that the Iroquois would never allow the

English to appropriate this post.¹ A suggestion that Niagara be fortified, made by the Charron brothers in 1706, had met with much the same reaction. The Charrons had pointed out, quite correctly, that the Niagara site was far more important than Detroit, since most of the Iroquois and western Indians travelling toward the colony had to negotiate its passes. The English, for that reason, had their eyes on this immensely strategic position and should it fall under their control they would be in a position to intercept the Upper Indians and control their commerce. Canada's ruin would follow in short order. But if the French seized it, the opposite would be true. They could then keep the Iroquois in awe and, provided they sold their trade goods cheaply enough, cut off the Albany trade.²

Upon receiving this report, Pontchartrain had passed it on to Vaudreuil and the Raudots for their comments.³ The administrators strongly disagreed with the Charrons' views. Precisely because Niagara in English hands would jeopardize the Iroquois' role of middlemen between Albany and the tribes farther west they would oppose such a development with all their strength. Under French control on the other hand, Niagara would draw the allies closer to the Iroquois and promote a trade between them, much as Detroit was doing.⁴ For the same reasons d'Aigremont also opposed a French

1. d'Aigremont au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, pp. 66 - 66v; see above p. 178.

2. Les frères Charron au ministre, 28 octobre 1706, AC, C 11 A, vol. 25, pp. 261 - 264.

3. Le ministre aux Raudots, 6 juin 1708, AC, B, vol. 29, pp. 320v - 321.

4. Vaudreuil et Raudot au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 28, pp. 35 - 37; les Raudot au ministre, 23 octobre 1708, Ibid., p. 271.

post on that site in his report of 1708.⁵ The question of the policy the French should follow along the lakes must have caused a great deal of discussion in the colony for the possibility of the French fortifying Niagara had come to the ears of the Iroquois. These Indians, it now became evident, were not at all interested in the subtler commercial implications Vaudreuil, the Raudots and d'Aigremont had emphasized. From their point of view a French move in the direction of Niagara would be an encroachment on their hunting grounds and for that reason they asked the English to help them prevent such a development.⁶ At a time when Vaudreuil was basing his entire war policy on Iroquois neutrality it was important to avoid antagonizing them with such an ill-timed move.

All this suddenly changed after 1713. As an immediate aftermath of Utrecht the New York merchants, for the first time in almost thirty years, began mounting an assault on the Great Lakes region. As early as 1712 the governor of New York had built a stockade among the Mohawks and planned to erect a second one among the Onondagas.⁷ In the fall of 1713, in pursuance of this policy, Albany made a first attempt at expanding into the western territories of the Confederacy. Vaudreuil, who was aware of these manoeuvres, pointed out to the Five Nations that since the French were forbidden by the treaty of Utrecht to have settlements among them "il n'estoit pas naturel qu'ils [the English] en

5. d'Aigremont au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, pp. 31v - 32v.

6. Wraxall, pp. 54 - 55.

7. See above p. 141, note 63.

en eussent non plus."⁸ Practically at the same time, however, Robert Hunter governor of New York was losing no opportunity to impress upon the Iroquois their new status of British dependents.⁹ English pressure continued to build up after Vaudreuil's departure for France in the fall of 1714. While Longueuil was visiting with the Onondagas these Indians were told by one of Hunter's emissaries that a group of Englishmen would shortly be arriving among them to build a fort in their village.¹⁰ "Il n'y a pas lieu de douter," wrote Ramezay, "que les Anglois ne fassent ce fort dans le but d'étendre leur commerce dans les pays d'en haut, ce qui est d'autant plus facheux qu'il semble que par l'article 15 du traité ces cinq villages soient censés terres angloises."¹¹ To rectify this, Ramezay suggested a frontier settlement which, by following the Alleghanies, would place the three westernmost Iroquois nations under French jurisdiction.¹²

The New Yorkers, as Ramezay perceived, had their eyes fastened on the commerce of the West. In fact they made no attempt to conceal their designs. In October 1714, while on one of their

8. Vaudreuil au ministre, 14 novembre 1713, AC, C 11 A, vol. 34, p. 46.

9. "I am further to acquaint you that in the terms of peace Her Majesty has reserved to her own subjects the trade with the Five Cantons so that the French cannot be settled amongst you without the breach of these articles." Conference between governor Hunter and the Indians, September 20, 1714, NYCD, vol. 5, p. 384.

10. Ramezay et Bégon au ministre, 13 septembre 1715, AC, C 11 A, vol. 35, pp. 10 - 10v.

11. Loc. cit.

12. Délibération du Conseil de la Marine sur la lettre de Ramezay du 16 septembre 1715, AM, B 1, vol. 8, p. 291.

regular visits to Montreal, two of them boasted that they would soon be travelling to the Ottawas to obtain their supply of fur.¹³ The following year, no less than 150 Englishmen were preparing to visit the Mississagués on a trading mission. As soon as Ramezay heard of these plans he lodged a strong protest with Hunter. These Indians, he pointed out, inhabited the north shores of lake Ontario and until the limits were settled the English should abstain from trading in those regions. On the strength of this argument Hunter seems to have cancelled the expedition,¹⁴ but the situation was far from being under control. At about the same time, the Albany commissioners authorized six traders to go as far as Irondequat, on the south shore of lake Ontario about sixty miles from Niagara, and attempt opening a trade with the western Indians from that vantage point. Upon arriving at Irondequat they found a small trading house built on the site, occupied by five French traders and a gunsmith. The Senecas, however, were quite prepared to allow the Albany group to have a similar settlement. Shortly afterwards a group of western Indians arrived on the scene. The Albany traders presented them with gifts and reminded them of the free passage they enjoyed to their city.¹⁵ Obviously, diplomatic exchanges might soon prove insufficient to protect the Lakes from the inroads of New York.

Not long after returning to Canada in the fall of 1716,

13. Ramezay au ministre, 23 octobre 1714, AC, C 11 A, vol. 34, p. 362v.

14. Ramezay au ministre, 28 octobre 1715, AC, C 11 A, vol. 35, p. 92; Ramezay et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 7 novembre 1715, AM, B 1, vol. 8, p. 269v.

15. Wraxall, pp. 112 - 113.

Vaudreuil must have realized that the task facing him in those quarters was extremely delicate. Hunter, he soon had occasion to note, "travaille à attirer à Orange tous nos sauvages des Pays d'en Haut."¹⁶ Yet, although the home authorities wished him to maintain French positions in the Great Lakes region, they had also made it clear that peace was essential in the New World, not only with the English but with the Indians also. Indeed, a peace policy was no less important from the point of view of colonial interests. Hostilities with the natives, and especially the Iroquois, would make travel in the West hazardous and might even wreck the operations then underway for occupation of the Mississippi valley. Whatever protective policy was devised would clearly have to be of a nonprovocative nature.

For the moment therefore, Vaudreuil followed much the same tactics as Ramezay. In August 1717, for instance, he received word from Tonty, commander of Detroit, that a group of allies had arrived at his post from Albany, laden with English goods. A Mohawk chief accompanied them with instructions from Hunter to travel among the Upper Nations and invite them to take their trade to Albany. Vaudreuil immediately dispatched a letter to the governor of New York, accusing him of violating the treaty of Utrecht. At the same time he urged the allies to pillage the English deputies who ventured into their territories. He hoped that this would incite the Iroquois to mete out similar treatment to the allies journeying through their lands and frighten the latter away from Albany.¹⁷

16. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, AM, B 1, vol. 29, p. 24v.

17. Ibid., p. 26.

The governor and the other Canadian leaders, however, knew very well that such a makeshift policy could not provide a permanent solution to the problem facing New France on the Lakes. Now that the Iroquois barrier was a thing of the past the French had no choice but to entrench themselves on the Lakes in order to forestall English penetration. The importance suddenly attached to Detroit is most significant in this regard. Only a short time before the treaty of Utrecht the governor would have been happy to see this settlement abandoned. But soon after the conclusion of peace he was suggesting that this post be strengthened by means of a regular garrison in order to secure communications with Louisiana and prevent the English advance in those regions.¹⁸ Michel Bégon, for his part, was promoting an ambitious plan that would center on a fort at Niagara. Barks, large enough to carry the load of twenty-five canoes, would ply the Lakes between that post, Detroit and Michilimackinac. The intendant hoped that such a system would cut the cost of trade goods to the point where the French could undersell the English in that area. Although Bégon admitted that it might be difficult to win Iroquois consent to the re-establishment of Fort Niagara he thought that Longueuil and Joncaire could succeed in the task.¹⁹

Longueuil at this time was also suggesting that the French implant themselves on the Lakes. The first step would consist of

18. Délibération du Conseil de la Marine sur l'établissement du Détroit, 28 mars 1716, AM, B 1, vol. 8, p. 214; [Bégon et la Forest] Mémoire sur le Détroit, 1 octobre 1714, AC, C 11 A, vol. 34, pp. 321 - 325.

19. Bégon au ministre, 12 septembre 1714, Ibid., pp. 310v - 312v.

building a fort on lake Ontario, at the place referred to as the Bottom of the Lake, to keep the Mississagués from trading with the Iroquois when they returned from their hunting expedition in the region of lake Erie. The new settlement could be efficiently supplied once barks were built to navigate lake Ontario. Furthermore since the trade at the Bottom of the Lake would be a matter of public concern it should be carried on by the State.²⁰ But before this plan or, for that matter, any other which called for the building of trading posts on territory regarded by the Iroquois as their hunting grounds could be carried out, the consent of those Indians first had to be won. Vaudreuil pointed this out to the Council of the Marine while he was still in France. He confided that after his return to the colony he hoped to manage the affair in such a way that the Iroquois themselves would ask for the post suggested by Longueuil. Such a demand would practically oblige the Iroquois to protect it in case the English protested.²¹ For the moment, however, nothing came of this. Because the English now had a claim to the area by virtue of the treaty of Utrecht, the French authorities must have realized that any attempt on their part to occupy it by means of posts could easily lead to war. As a result before 1720, the French took no action at all along the Lakes.

Canada could not hold back in this manner indefinitely. Once the policy which was based on threats and hypothetical acts of

20. Ramezay et Bégon au ministre, 7 novembre 1715, AC, C 11 A, vol. 35, pp. 25 - 25v.

21. Délibération du Conseil de la Marine, s.d., AM, B 1, vol. 8, pp. 253v - 254; Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 14 octobre 1716, AC, C 11 A, vol. 37, p. 27.

violence on the part of the allies was proven ineffective, other measures would plainly become necessary. By 1719 these tactics were breaking down. Vaudreuil and Bégon were then informed that several English traders were preparing to travel to Niagara where they intended building a trading house. To win the assent of a nearby village of Senecas they had promised the chief a share in the profits.²² Vaudreuil interpreted this move as "un commencement d'établissement qui pourroit avoir des suites."²³ If the English succeeded in their venture they would be in a position to intercept the convoys coming from the Upper country and monopolize the bulk of the fur trade. To protect French interests and smooth the way for a French settlement at Niagara, Joncaire was sent to winter among the Senecas. Accompanying him were la Corne and a single assistant. These two men were instructed to winter at Niagara and open a trade with the first signs of spring.²⁴

After some twenty years of service among the Senecas, Joncaire's power and influence over them were at their height. The tactics he used to win the elusive consent to a French settlement at Niagara fully illustrate this. Early in 1720, he assembled the chiefs. Perceiving that one of their number was in the English interest he

22. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 26 octobre 1720, AC, C 11 A, vol. 41, p. 388.

23. Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 26 octobre 1719, AC, C 11 A, vol. 40, p. 58.

24. Ibid., p. 58v; Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 26 octobre 1720, AC, C 11 A, vol. 41, p. 389. No proof can be found to substantiate the allegation of the Rev. Durant, the Récollet chaplain of Fort Frontenac who went over to the English in 1721, that the order to establish Niagara came from the French court in 1718. NYCD, vol. 5, p. 588. On the contrary the project clearly seems to have originated with Vaudreuil who had been counseled by Joncaire.

had him degraded and replaced by a candidate of his own choosing.²⁵ He then informed this gathering that he had always derived keen pleasure from his visits to their villages. In fact, he ventured, he would be happy to visit with them more frequently if he possessed a dwelling of his own where he could withdraw. To this the Senecas replied that Joncaire, as one of their children, was free to build himself a house wherever he chose.²⁶ The interpreter wanted to hear no more. He hurried to fort Frontenac with la Corne, chose eight soldiers, and proceeded directly to Niagara. There, on the south side of the river, some nine miles below the cataract, the group built a long cabin and displayed the French colours. Shortly afterwards a small trading post was built at the Bottom of the Lake and yet another at Quinté.²⁷ In a series of lightning moves, the French had moved in on the Lakes.

News of what was happening quickly reached Albany and spread consternation among the traders of that city. Robert Livingston, a resident for forty-five years, stated that he had "never found our condition attended by more melancholy circumstances."²⁸ The Albany authorities in general complained of the "awe" the French had gained over the Confederacy and deplored that by means of

25. Wraxall, p. 127.

26. F.X. Charlevoix, Journal historique, vol. 3, pp. 226 - 227. Charlevoix stopped off at Niagara in May 1721, one year after construction of the trading house. He may have held this version of the affair from an eye witness.

27. Mr. Durant's memorial relative to the French post at Niagara, NYCD, vol. 5, pp. 588 - 591.

28. Livingston to Schuyler, August 23, 1720, Ibid., p. 559.

their house at Niagara "an entire stop is made of the whole Far trade."²⁹ At that time Robert Hunter had left the colony to take up a post in England. Until his successor, William Burnet, should arrive, Peter Schuyler was acting as governor and desperately attempting to undo the work of the French. He began by sending an embassy to the Senecas to exhort them to demolish the building. This mission did in fact show that several of those Indians were siding with the English. They asked Claase, the interpreter, to accompany them to Niagara and order Joncaire to proceed no further and demolish what was begun. La Corne, who was then on duty, flatly stated he would do nothing of the kind without orders from Vaudreuil.³⁰ Claase then confronted Joncaire in full assembly with no apparent success.³¹ Meantime, in Albany, Schuyler was meeting with the chiefs of all the Iroquois nations except those of the Senecas. They declared that if he would send some of his men to Niagara, they would go "unanimously" and pull the building down.³² Although these successive episodes yielded no tangible results they are nonetheless extremely important for understanding the character of the struggle on the Lakes. They reveal that although most of the Iroquois were faithful to the English, they sufficiently feared the French to refuse to take action without full English support. The latter would no doubt have liked to

29. Representations of the authorities of the city of Albany, September 14, 1720, Ibid., pp. 570 - 572.

30. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 26 octobre 1720, AC, C 11 A, vol. 41, pp. 389 - 390; Journal of Lawrence Clawson's visit to Niagara, May 22, 1720, NYCD, vol. 5, pp. 550 - 551.

31. Loc. cit.

32. Conference between Colonel Schuyler and the Indians, August 25, 1720, Ibid., pp. 562 - 569.

volunteer this assistance, but the European peace prevented them from doing so. The entire French position on the Lakes was built on an exploitation of this paralyzing cleavage in the Anglo-Iroquois alliance, which made joint action impossible,³³ and on the sizeable influence of Joncaire to which would soon be joined that of Longueuil.

The English, therefore, found themselves in the position of having to drive the French from Niagara without being able to resort to violence. The diplomatic approach to the problem, however, seemed promising since it could be contended, quite legitimately, that the Niagara trading house had been built in violation of the treaty of Utrecht and of a deed of 1701 whereby the Five Nations had placed their hunting grounds under English protection.³⁴ Schuyler lost no time in calling Vaudreuil's attention to English suzerainty over the land of the Iroquois³⁵ and a few months after his arrival William Burnet sent a courteous but firmly worded note to the governor of New France. He pointed out that the trading house prevented the western Indians from going to Albany, thus interfering with the freedom of trade sanctioned by Utrecht. The Iroquois themselves being British subjects it was illegal for the French to settle on their lands. Furthermore,

33. Vaudreuil and Bégon stated that it was unlikely "que les Anglois soient jamais en état de rien entreprendre sur ce poste ni sur ceux des pays d'en haut lorsqu'ils ne seront pas soutenus par les Iroquois." Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 8 août 1721, AC, C 11 A, vol. 43, p. 400v.

34. Deed from the Five Nations to the King of their beaver hunting grounds, NYCD, vol. 4, pp. 908 - 910. In all likelihood the Five Nations made this grant in the hope that it would oblige the English to oppose the settling of Detroit by the French.

35. Schuyler to the Lords of Trade, July 13, 1720, NYCD, vol. 5, p. 550.

nothing should be innovated by way of trading posts until the limits between the two colonies were settled.³⁶ The Niagara trading house, retorted Vaudreuil, was not an innovation. The colony's claim to the site dated back to the days of la Salle and this left the French perfectly free to plant a settlement there if they so desired. The English, however, would be guilty of a breach of peace if they tried to occupy it.³⁷ Vaudreuil, in an effort to nullify the effects of the treaty of Utrecht, was opposing to clause 15 the rights of the French as discoverers and first occupants of the Niagara region.

Vaudreuil's reply must have disappointed Burnet who also had his eyes on Niagara. Soon after his arrival in New York he had become acquainted with its strategic importance and also with the fact that the French used largely English goods to supply their allies. The Albany commissioners themselves would later state that English stroud in the hands of the French "lay at Iagara as a wall over which the... Far Indians could not come to carry on a free trade hither."³⁸ Burnet now began developing the most comprehensive program yet devised by a governor of New York to break the French hold on the West. It rested principally on two acts, passed by the provincial assembly shortly after his arrival. The one prohibited the selling of Indian goods to the French; the other, a 2% duty act levied on all European goods imported into

36. Copie d'une lettre à m. de Vaudreuil du 11 juillet 1721 par m. William Burnet, gouverneur de New York, AC, C 11 A, vol. 44, pp. 148 - 150.

37. Copie d'une lettre écrite le 24 août 1721 par m. de Vaudreuil à m. Burnet, Ibid., pp. 143v - 146v.

38. Report of the Commissioners of Indian affairs, November 12, 1724, NYCD, vol. 5, pp. 740 - 741.

the province, was meant to finance the building of three forts.³⁹ The first was to be erected among the Onondagas, to secure for the Western Indians a passageway to Albany free of all French interference; the other two were intended for Niagara, one below and the other above the falls. From the last of these establishments, vessels could trade into all the Great Lakes. Burnet foresaw that such a policy would result in "an immense trade, never yet attempted by us, and now carried on by the French with goods brought from this province."⁴⁰ In other words, as the French trading empire decayed beneath this adverse legislation, one controlled by New York would spring up in its place.

This Grand Design was well conceived and might have struck a devastating blow at French commerce had the New York and British merchants cooperated with the governor in carrying it out. Unfortunately for Burnet, these mercantile interests manifested strong opposition to the program and in 1724 they secured the repeal of the 2% duty act whose produce was meant to finance the building of forts.⁴¹ It was the act restricting the Indian trade with Canada, however, which drew their special ire. As a result of this measure, they complained, the import of beaver pelts into

39. The first of these acts was termed "for the encouragement of the Indian trade and rendering of it more beneficial to the inhabitants of this province and for the prohibiting the selling of Indian goods to the French." On Burnet's Indian policy in general see H.L. Osgood, The American Colonies in the XVIII Century, vol. 2, pp. 418 - 422.

40. For the complete explanation of his programme see, Burnet to the Lords of Trade, November 26, 1720, NYCD, vol. 5, pp. 576 - 580.

41. The Lords of trade to Burnet, June 17, 1724, Ibid., vol. 5, p. 707.

England was decreasing and prices for this commodity were rising.⁴² Although Burnet contested the truth of these allegations and continued to press his policy by having the act renewed in 1722 and 1724, he admitted that the merchants were evading it.⁴³ Finally, in 1729, two years after Burnet's departure, all these acts were repealed. It was certainly not solely the spirit of gain that prompted the merchants to resist the governor but also the fear that the French would rather go to war than relax their hold on the West.

Although this resistance blunted the edge of Burnet's offensive on the economy of the French empire, it was still trenchant enough to inflict considerable damage to French positions on the Lakes. The governor of New York consistently claimed that as a result of his programme trade with Canada was decreasing while the number of Indians trading with New York was showing a sizeable increase.⁴⁴ The measures attracted little more than passing notice in Canada

42. Affidavit of Mssr's Groesbeck and Schuyler, February 24, 1724, Ibid., vol. 5, pp. 743 - 744; Representations of the Lords of Trade to the King, July 14, 1724, Ibid., vol. 5, pp. 707 - 709; Proceedings of the Lords of Trade on the New York acts regulating the Indian trade, May 5, 1725, Ibid., vol. 5, p. 745.

43. Burnet to the Lords of Trade, November 1724, Ibid., vol. 5, p. 711; Wraxall, pp. 140 - 141.

44. "Trade with the French is quite broken" Burnet to the Lords of Trade, March 9, 1721, NYCD, vol. 5, p. 584; "Trade with the Far Indians is on the way to increasing" Burnet to the Lords of Trade, November 21, 1722, Ibid., vol. 5, p. 657; Burnet to the Lords of Trade, June 25, 1723, Ibid., vol. 5, pp. 684 - 685; Burnet to the Lords of Trade, August 9, 1724, Ibid., vol. 5, pp. 709 - 710; An account received from Schenectady indicates that from 1716 to 1720, only 30 canoes of Far Indians had come there to trade. This number increased to 323 between 1720 and 1724, Burnet to the Lords of Trade, November 21, 1724, Ibid., vol. 5, p. 739; In 1725 the commissioners told Burnet that 52 canoes and nearly 100 persons had been employed in trade with the Far Indians and above 788 bundles of skin had been brought to Albany. Besides that, 43 canoes of Far Indians had brought 200 bundles to Schenectady and Albany. During the same period, only 176 bundles of beaver and deer skin had come from Canada. Wraxall, pp. 159 - 160.

although Vaudreuil did state on one occasion that because of the guards Burnet had placed on the routes leading to the colony,⁴⁵ almost no stroud had reached it that year. The meagre results of the trade at Niagara, Bottom of the Lake and Fort Frontenac, however, show quite clearly that the French were losing ground, despite the strategic positions they occupied.⁴⁶ The regular visits carried out by the New York merchants to the shores of Lake Ontario no doubt contributed heavily to the undermining of French commerce in that area. In the fall of 1721, Peter Schuyler Jr. had led a party of ten men to Irondequat. They were instructed to reside there twelve months, build a trading house and "use all lawful means to draw the fur trade thither by sending notice to the Far Indians that you are settled there for their ease and encouragement."⁴⁷ The success of the experiment determined Burnet to plant a similar settlement at Oswego, situated at the mouth of the Onondaga river, "where the chief trade with the Far Indians lie."⁴⁸ At a conference held in September 1724, the Five Nations agreed to let the English build a blockhouse on the site⁴⁹ perhaps

45. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de Marine, 8 août 1721, AC, C 11 A, vol. 43, p. 396v.

46. Value of trade in 1716, - 16,970 livres, AC, C 11 A, vol. 38, pp. 177 - 178v; in 1717 - 34,053 livres, Ibid., p. 179; in 1718 - 20,214 livres, Ibid., p. 181; in 1721 - 16,774 livres, AC, C 11 A, vol. 44, pp. 223 - 223v; in 1722 - 18,178 livres, AC, C 11 A, vol. 45, pp. 285 - 286; in 1723 - 22,732 livres, Ibid., pp. 285 - 286. It should be borne in mind that after 1720 the French had four trading posts on lake Ontario, whereas before that date there was only Fort Frontenac.

47. Burnet's Instructions to Captain Peter Schuyler Jr., October 16, 1721, NYCD, vol. 5, pp. 641 - 642.

48. Conference of Governor Burnet with the Indians, September 15, 1724, Ibid., vol. 5, p. 716.

49. Ibid. p. 716.

in the hope that an increased trade would cause goods to grow cheaper. Suddenly, panic swept through New France.

Until that year, through a clever exploitation of Iroquois fears and the European peace, the French had successfully maintained their lake positions. Vaudreuil repeatedly assured the court that as long as Joncaire was in command the English would never succeed in opening a trade at Niagara or in turning the Iroquois against the French.⁵⁰ The governor, of course, was not above assuming a good part of the credit for this happy state of affairs. "Mes continuelles attentions et les justes mesures que j'ai toujours prises pour rendre leur [the Iroquois] esprit docile," he informed Morville, the new minister of the marine, "me répondent qu'ils n'entreprendront jamais rien à mon préjudice... et j'ai lieu d'être fort tranquille à ce sujet."⁵¹ In 1723, largely through the efforts of Joncaire, the French were permitted to replace the trading house by a stockade large enough to accommodate three hundred defenders.⁵²

News that the English were preparing to build a trading house at Oswego with full Iroquois consent were brought back to the colony by Longueuil and burst like a thunderclap in this atmosphere of serene optimism. Although several parties of Englishmen had gone to lake Ontario on temporary trading missions, a

50. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 17 octobre 1722, AC, C 11 A, vol. 44, p. 299; Vaudreuil et Bégon à Morville, 14 octobre 1723, AC, C 11 A, vol. 45, p. 36v; Vaudreuil et Bégon à Maurepas, 2 novembre 1724, AC, C 11 A, vol. 46, p. 37v.

51. Vaudreuil au ministre, 5 octobre 1723, AC, C 11 A, vol. 45, pp. 142v - 143.

52. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Robert, 30 mai 1724, AC, B, vol. 47, p. 1144.

blockhouse would constitute a permanent breakthrough and represent a constant menace to the defensive system the French had developed. Suddenly, it seemed that the Iroquois had shaken off the spell of Joncaire and joined forces with the English to oppose actively French policy. This, in turn, caused the governor to fear for the safety of Niagara which was only protected by a wooden stockade. In May 1725, Maurepas was advised of these developments by a special dispatch which turned out to be Vaudreuil's last on the subject before his death five months later. "En perdant Niagara", Vaudreuil stated with emphasis, "nous perdons en même temps tout le commerce avec les sauvages des Pays d'en haut que les Anglois essaient tous les jours d'attirer chez eux."⁵³ Since the English were backed by the Iroquois, however, opposing the former by force was out of the question. Yet, it might still be possible to intimidate them and hamper their movements. To carry men and supplies to Oswego, the English and Dutch of Albany were attempting to purchase one hundred bark canoes from the Montreal merchants and domiciled Indians. An ordonnance was promptly published to forbid all such transactions.⁵⁴ At the same time a group of mission Indians agreed to go to Albany where they protested, to no avail, against the intended establishment and threatened the English with war if it was carried out.⁵⁵ The most important measures, however, concerned the defense of Niagara itself. As soon as the weather permitted, Vaudreuil intended replacing the stockade

53. Vaudreuil au ministre, 22 mai 1725, AC, C 11 A, vol. 47, p. 166.

54. Ibid., p. 167.

55. Ibid., p. 167v.

by a stone fort and he also judged it necessary to have barks cruising on Lake Ontario to intercept the allies and keep the new fort supplied with ammunition and trade goods.⁵⁶ Bégon fully concurred with the governor. At the height of winter he had begun to move woodcutters, carpenters and blacksmiths to Fort Frontenac so that work might begin on the boats with the first signs of spring.⁵⁷ Longueuil was selected to win Iroquois consent to the innovations the French proposed on lake Ontario. This may well have been the most important mission of his long career.

Explaining Iroquois behaviour beyond 1715 is a difficult task.⁵⁸ It seems quite certain, however, that past that date those Indians were no longer following an independent policy as they had done throughout the War of the Spanish Succession. The French and English, it is true, could undertake little if anything on the Lakes without their support; but they were now granting this support to the side which applied the strongest pressure. Such a course of action was ruinous and would soon divest the Confederacy of all importance in the conduct of American affairs. Still, it was the only solution to the fundamental problem of security which had plagued them since the beginning of the eighteenth century. After the treaty of Utrecht, the colonizing

56. Ibid., pp. 166v - 167; Bégon au ministre, 10 juin 1725, Ibid., pp. 232v - 233v.

57. Ibid., pp. 234 - 234v.

58. Until 1715 approximately, Iroquois embassies had visited both Montreal and Albany to transact official business. From the mass of testimony to be found on these conferences in both the English and French documents, Iroquois policy can be synthesized with fair possibilities of accuracy. Beyond that date, however, the Iroquois transacted exclusively with the English although they continued to visit Canada. As a result of this, one side of the diplomatic triangle is missing.

powers rather than the western Indians were the threatening force so that their immunity largely hinged on their ability to find themselves on the right side at the right time. Economic motivation may also shed some light on their conduct at this time. The Iroquois had often complained of the high price of trade goods. They may therefore have hoped that by allowing trading posts on the land they had so bitterly defended against intruders during the seventeenth century, commerce would increase and merchandise would become cheaper and more plentiful. Whatever their real motive, they had clearly come out in favour of the English in 1724. Not only did they then consent to a trading house at Oswego but they also sent two wampum belts to Joncaire to signify their opposition to the fort and barks the French proposed to build.⁵⁹

Viewed against this background, the difficulty of Longueuil's assignment becomes evident. If he found the English already settled at Oswego he was to order them to withdraw until such a time as the boundaries were settled and threaten them with eviction by force if they refused to comply. At the same time he had to win the agreement of the Iroquois to a French fort at Niagara and convince them to oppose an English settlement at Oswego. Vaudreuil suggested some of the arguments he might use to achieve these ends. He should point out that a fort at Niagara would not only bring trade goods to their doorstep but also protect them in case of war.⁶⁰ Should the Iroquois, despite these arguments, persist in maintaining the English at Oswego and in opposing French

59. Bégon au ministre, 10 juin 1725, AC, C 11 A, vol. 47, p. 237; Discours de M. de Longueuil aux Iroquois assemblés au village des Montagués, s.d., Ibid., pp. 201v - 202.

60. Vaudreuil au ministre, 22 mai 1725, Ibid., p. 168v.

plans for Niagara, Vaudreuil concluded that "il faut absolument renoncer au commerce des pays d'en haut et s'attendre à nous voir enlever tous les postes que nous y avons, les uns après les autres."⁶¹ Faced with this dismal prospect in the Upper country and an equally gloomy one in the East where the Abenakis were fighting a losing battle against the New Englanders the governor urged that Canada gird for war and prepare to defend its claims to the West by the force of arms. His pessimism on the outcome of Longueuil's mission is reflected in his demand to Maurepas that preparations for war with the English begin immediately. More recruits, guns and ammunition were necessary to allow an effective defense of the colony and of the western posts.⁶² By September, when news of Longueuil's essential success reached Canada, Vaudreuil lay dying at Québec's Chateau St.Louis.

The thorough knowledge of Iroquois mentality Longueuil had acquired over a period of almost thirty years and the gaucherie of the English made it possible for him to achieve what he did. A party of one hundred Englishmen had just arrived at Oswego when Longueuil presented himself at the site en route to the Onondaga village. The English captain, however, refused to let him proceed unless he could produce a passport, signed by Vaudreuil. Longueuil made the most of this tactlessness by criticizing the group of Onondagas, who had witnessed the incident, for allowing the Englishman to slight him in this manner. Obviously, he continued, they were no longer the masters of their land. The Iroquois

61. Ibid., p. 171.

62. Ibid., pp. 171v - 172v.

reaction was all he could have hoped for. Angrily, they informed the English that they would not tolerate them at Oswego if they insisted on posing as the masters of the place. Let them attend to their trade and nothing else besides.⁶³ The Onondagas and deputies of the other nations may still have been resentful of the English when Longueuil met with them in full assembly.

Longueuil now emphasized the pacific intentions of the French. Having noticed that the mention of a fort aroused the hostility and suspicion of the Iroquois he asked them to consent to a house built of masonry, where trade goods could be safely stored. He assured that it would not hamper them in their movements nor would it deprive them of the privilege to trade where they wished. Furthermore, he warned, war between the French and English might break out at almost any time. In such a case they could find protection at Niagara, once the French had a strong settlement there. The Iroquois, who must have been aware of Anglo-French tensions, may have feared that refusing Longueuil's request would lead to a war which would transform their territories into a battleground. They may also have hoped that the French at Niagara and the English at Oswego might engage in a price war that would redound to their advantage. They consented to the stone building and the two barks "sur l'espérance que vous nous donné de nous y faire trouver nos besoins à meilleur marché."⁶⁴ Where Oswego was concerned, however, Longueuil appears to have accomplished little if anything. In the long report on his mission addressed to

63. Longueuil et Bégon à Maurepas, 31 octobre 1725, Ibid., pp. 122v - 123v.

64. Discours de M. de Longueuil aux Iroquois assemblés au village des Montagués, s.d., Ibid., pp. 201 - 204.

Maurepas he only mentions very briefly that the Iroquois had assured him that they would not allow the English to settle there.⁶⁵

So as to give the English no time to pressure the Iroquois into withdrawing their consent, the permission thus secured had to be acted upon swiftly. Quick action was also necessary to keep the French positions throughout the West from collapsing completely. During his voyage, Longueuil had encountered over one hundred canoes of western Indians going to or coming from Albany.⁶⁶ English trading parties were moving along the shores of lake Ontario and playing havoc with the trade of the four French posts. From 29,297 livres in 1724, the produce of this trade fell to 9,151 livres in 1725⁶⁷ and to 8,108 livres in 1726.⁶⁸ Longueuil feared that the western Indians themselves would soon be inviting the English to travel more deeply into their territories. To restore some semblance of authority on the Lakes Longueuil intended moving one hundred soldiers to Niagara as soon as the building was completed. How desperate the situation had become can be inferred from the demand Longueuil and Bégon were making to Maurepas that the French be permitted the use of physical force to drive the English from lake Ontario. The English being slow in building their blockhouse at Oswego, they even suggested that the French move in quickly and appropriate the site by fortifications. They

65. Longueuil et Bégon au ministre, 31 octobre 1725, Ibid., p. 128v.

66. Ibid., pp. 126 - 126v.

67. Etat des pelleteries provenant de la traite faite au fort Frontenac, à Niagara et dans le fond du lac Ontario pendant les années 1724 et 1725, AC, C 11 A, vol. 47, pp. 263 - 265.

68. Etat des pelleteries au fort Frontenac, Niagara et dans le fonds du lac Ontario, AC, C 11 A, vol. 48, p. 274.

explained that the French could not assist the Abenakis because their ~~war with New England~~ was being waged in part on New England soil. This problem of sovereignty did not exist in the West, however, since the country of the Great Lakes had been deemed a French possession since the founding of the colony.⁶⁹ Obviously Longueuil was prepared to brush aside clause 15 of the peace treaty. Soon, he would openly repudiate it.

Work on the two barks and the building was pushed with all possible speed. By the fall of 1725 the boats had been completed at Fort Frontenac at a cost of 13,090 livres.⁷⁰ Early in the spring of 1726, one hundred soldiers and several laborers under the command of Longueuil's son, the engineer Chaussegros de Léry and four subordinate officers set out for Niagara to start work on the building. Although progress was delayed by rain and disease, most of the stonework was done by the fall of that year.⁷¹ Longueuil, however, was unable to win the ministry's approval of the desperate measures he proposed to keep lake Ontario closed to the English.

Receipt of Vaudreuil's dispatch of May, 1725 had caused a flurry of excitement at court and a conference appears to have been held on the subject of the policy the French should follow along the Lakes. The governor's demands, it was decided, were too vague to warrant immediate action. Furthermore, the outcome

69. Longueuil et Bégon au ministre, 31 octobre 1725, AC, C 11 A, vol. 47, pp. 121 - 133.

70. Ibid., p. 126.

71. Longueuil au ministre, 23 juillet 1726, AC, C 11 A, vol. 48, pp. 396 - 398; Extrait de la lettre de M. de Noyan à M. de Beauharnois, 22 septembre 1726, Ibid., p. 160.

of Longueuil's mission was not yet known and it was too late in the year to send the reinforcements Vaudreuil had asked for.⁷² Maurepas obviously did not want to pronounce himself on the issue of war before being more fully informed, but he was nonetheless sufficiently disturbed to authorize the use of force to prevent the English from settling Oswego.⁷³ Fortunately, these dispatches were lost in the wreck of le Chameau. Otherwise, war might have broken out in the colonies as early as 1726. Maurepas must have realized his mistake, for his instructions to Vaudreuil's successor, Beauharnois, were far more moderate in tone. They explained how the English were hoping to secure alliances with the western Indians in order to turn them against the French at the first sign of war and drive them from America. To oppose these designs as best it could, the court authorized the sale of brandy to the Indians and even revived the obsolete congés. The new governor was also told to bear in mind the necessity of forcing the English out of Oswego, but to achieve this end he was to act indirectly, through the Iroquois.⁷⁴ After a brief moment of hesitancy, the necessity of preserving peace had reasserted itself.

When the English learned of French activities at Niagara, they immediately began planning countermeasures. In fact, as soon as news of Vaudreuil's death had reached England, the home authorities had instructed Horace Walpole, Ambassador to France, to use his

72. This is based on an untitled document which appears to be an account of events in Canada written by a clerk of the ministry, Ibid., p. 44lv.

73. Le ministre à Chazel, 11 août 1725, AC, B, vol. 48, p. 894.

74. Mémoire du Roy à Beauharnois et Dupuy, 14 mai 1726, AC, B, vol. 49, pp. 656 - 658.

considerable influence at the French court "to have such a governor appointed of their settlements as may not tread in the steps of his predecessors by giving underhand disturbance to our plantations."⁷⁵ This diplomatic pressure increased after the Board of Trade was told of the building going up at Niagara. A memoir protesting the action was presented to Cardinal Fleury.⁷⁶ As for the Duke of Newcastle, he explained to Walpole how the building was a violation of the treaty of Utrecht and asked him to do everything necessary to insure that the French court would order it destroyed.⁷⁷ In replying to these demands, the French authorities blamed the English for the turn of events in America, accused them of usurping French territory under cover of executing the provisions of the treaty of Utrecht and complained of Burnet who was inciting the Dutch and English merchants to trade into Lake Ontario, to the great prejudice of French commerce in that region. By a piece of reasoning known only to himself, the author of this memoir claimed that the freedom of trade sanctioned at Utrecht did not justify such a policy.⁷⁸ Although this was tantamount to repudiating clause 15 of the treaty, the French had no choice in the matter. Submitting to it would have meant forfeiting the West and, in short order, the colony itself.

75. Undersecretary Delafaye to Burnet, December 6, 1725, NYCD, vol. 5, pp. 771 - 772. One may speculate on the possibility of connection between Walpole's activity and the sudden change in Maurepas' attitude.

76. Mémoire sur le fort de Niagara présenté à S.E. M. le cardinal de Fleury, 9 mai 1727, AC, C 11 A, vol. 49, pp. 247 - 249v.

77. Copie d'une lettre de Newcastle à Walpole, 11 août 1727, AC, C 11 A, vol. 49, pp. 207 - 207v.

78. Réponse au Mémoire et lettres présentés par M. de Valpool, ambassadeur du Roy d'Angleterre au sujet du fort de Niagara, s.d., Ibid., pp. 254v - 257v.

Meantime, in America, Burnet's notes to Longueuil, acting governor since the death of Vaudreuil, were obtaining no greater success. The Five Nations, Longueuil replied, when Burnet raised the issue of their British dependence, "sont ni nos sujets ni les vôtres."⁷⁹ In the face of this attitude, New York could do little **outside** of following the French example and securing Oswego by means of fortifications. Although the lakeside traffic had attracted a considerable number of traders in 1726, the blockhouse projected two years earlier had not yet been built. The New York Assembly was now sufficiently aroused to vote £ 300 for a settlement at Oswego. With this sum, Burnet proposed to build a stone fort and provide it with an officer and twenty men.⁸⁰ Obtaining Iroquois consent presented no difficulty. At a meeting with Burnet, these Indians complained that the Onondagas alone, deluded by the fair speeches of Longueuil, had consented to the Niagara house. All of them now joined in asking the governor to have it demolished.⁸¹ Early in the spring of 1727, workmen and two hundred traders, armed as militia "and ready to join in defense of the building and their trade", began the journey to Oswego. For greater security, sixty soldiers soon joined them.⁸² Fourteen years after Utrecht, the English had finally achieved the massive

79. Lettre de M. de Longueuil à M. Burnet, 16 août 1726, AC, C 11 A, vol. 48, pp. 403 - 403v.

80. Burnet to the Lords of Trade, December 4, 1726, NYCD, vol. 5, pp. 783 - 785.

81. Conference between Governor Burnet and the sachims of the Six Nations, September 9, 1726, Ibid., p. 795; Conference between Governor Burnet and the Indians, September 7, 1726, Ibid., pp. 786 - 789.

82. Burnet to the Lords of Trade, May 9, 1727, Ibid., pp. 818 - 819; Burnet to the Duke of Newcastle, May 10, 1727, Ibid., p. 820.

breakthrough so long in preparation. The development which Vaudreuil and Bégon dreaded above all, and over which they had been willing to go to war, had become a reality.

A chain of trading posts extending from Fort Frontenac to Niagara was the solution devised by Vaudreuil, in collaboration with other colonial administrators, to protect the Upper country from the inroads of expansionist New York. The plan was sound and the French, by moving first, appropriated Niagara, the choicest site of all. Yet, because of the economic superiority of New York, these posts could not prevent the English and Dutch merchants from trading with the western Indians. As a result, the trade of the English increased after 1713 while that of the French stagnated. The effects of such a state of affairs on Canada's western alliance was disastrous. Both Vaudreuil and Longueuil admitted that a sizeable portion of the Upper Nations, perhaps even a majority of them, now sided with the English.⁸³ The situation, nonetheless, could have been far worse. Had it not been for Vaudreuil's energetic policy, which he pursued at the risk of provoking the English to war, France's western empire might well have collapsed completely by 1725.

83. "Les Outaouais des Pays d'en Haut... sont aujourd'hui autant dans les intérêts des Anglois et des Iroquois qu'ils paraissent être dans les nôtres." Vaudreuil au ministre, 22 mai 1725, AC, C 11 A, vol. 47, p. 169v; "Le commerce que les sauvages des Pays d'en Haut font à Orange depuis plusieurs années les attache de manière avec les Anglois, qu'il seroit à craindre qu'ils ne les favorissassent autant qu'ils le pourroient." Longueuil et Bégon au ministre, 31 octobre 1725, Ibid., p. 129.

CHAPTER XII

The Occupation of the Interior

After 1713, the territories extending south of the Great Lakes toward Louisiana, and westward toward a still nebulous western sea, occupied an increasingly important position in French policy. Interest in those regions was not, of course, entirely new. It had manifested itself as early as the 1670's in the activities of la Salle, Radisson, and du Lhut. At that time, however, French expansionism was essentially economic in nature and political considerations were scarcely if at all existent. This commercially inspired western policy gave way, in 1700, to a purely imperialistic one based on the settlements of Detroit and Louisiana. The Detroit experiment, however, was inspired by erroneous ideas while Louisiana, for lack of implementation, was left to vegetate. It could well be said, therefore, that it was only after the treaty of Utrecht that the Southwest became the object of a comprehensive policy of occupation designed to achieve politico-economic ends. The discovery of the Western Sea, or at any rate the development of a chain of posts tending toward such an event, also became important at this time to cut off the Hudson's Bay trade. In its early stages, however, Canadian Westward expansion would be complicated by war with the Fox Indians and by the annexation of the Illinois country to Louisiana. It is the purpose of this chapter to examine Vaudreuil's policy of expansion into the far West in relation to these two factors.

Occupation of the West was rendered difficult at the very outset by war with the Fox tribes.¹ The crushing defeat they had suffered at Detroit in 1712 had not deterred them from further hostilities. They were back on the warpath the following year and quickly killed five Hurons and three Frenchmen.² The menace they represented was increased by the possibility that the populous Ouyatanon Miamis might join up with them out of exasperation with the Illinois, their inveterate enemies.³ Such an alliance, for all practical purpose, would have severed relations with Louisiana. The tribes settled at Detroit, who stood the most exposed to the inroads of the Fox, were also growing restless. A delegation representing these Indians appeared in Montreal during the summer of 1713 and asked the French to intervene actively on their behalf.⁴ New France, for the first time since the mid 1690's, was faced with the frightening perspective of becoming involved in a full-scale Indian war. Vaudreuil was nonetheless prepared to take this step in order to maintain French authority and reputation among the allies.

Waging war on the Fox, however, was no easy matter. In fact such operations, in their techniques, would almost certainly prove more difficult than those of the second Iroquois War. The Confederacy lay relatively close to Canada and had been ringed by hostile tribes. The Fox, on the other hand, were located over one

1. For the beginnings of the war see above, Chapter VIII.

2. Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 15 novembre 1713, AC, C 11 A, vol. 34, p. 13v.

3. Vaudreuil au ministre, 14 novembre 1713, Ibid., p. 52.

4. Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 15 novembre 1713, Ibid., p. 13v.

thousand miles in the interior and could rely on several friendly nations to grant them assistance or at least a safe retreat. Although less formidable than the Iroquois they presented a far more elusive target. The French court, moreover, had actively supported the war effort of the 1690's, but in 1713 the ministry of the marine was in the throes of the worst financial crisis of its history. Under such conditions it could not be expected that France would have much to spare for a new colonial war.

The character of the personnel Vaudreuil proposed to recruit for the campaign was sufficiently indicative of some of the difficulties involved. For lack of anything resembling trustworthy material the governor was forced to rely on the most volatile elements of Canadian society: renegade coureurs, specially amnestied for the occasion, and Canadians who would agree to volunteer in return for trading permits. This body was to be reinforced by as many as possible of the western allies. After assembling at Michilimackinac, the army was to march against the Fox stronghold located near Green Bay.⁵ The dispatch outlining this plan arrived at court at the same time as Louvigny who had been sent to France to press for the reoccupation of Michilimackinac by a garrison and commanding officer. Despite the menace the Fox represented, this officer strongly opposed the idea of plunging the colony into another Indian war. Undertakings of this nature were fraught with uncertainty and danger which were now increased by the destitute condition of the colony. He feared that nothing could be achieved with a striking force composed of such disorderly elements as

5. Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 15 novembre 1713, Ibid., pp. 14v - 15.

renegades, fur traders, and Indians who probably detested each other more than they did the Fox. Rather than begin a campaign under such unfavorable auspices no effort should be spared to preserve peace,⁶ but if war absolutely had to be waged, Louvigny urged that five or six hundred men be raised and equipped at the King's expense.⁷

Louvigny's criticism struck a respondent chord in Pontchartrain. The minister remembered all too well the destruction and loss of life caused by the Iroquois during their war with the colony and he suggested that Vaudreuil and Bégon meditate on this before taking any action. For his part he feared that war with the Fox might well have similar repercussions. "Cette affaire," he wrote, "que bien des gens regardent comme aisée et facile peut devenir sérieuse et mettre tout le continent en feu"⁸. To Ramezay, he pointed out that war might well bring the fur trade to a standstill.⁹ Only, therefore, if a peaceful settlement with the Fox proved impossible was the governor to wage^{war} on them. In such a case he was to proceed according to his own plan and employ the western allies and renegade coureurs. The King himself would not advance a single sol for the enterprise.¹⁰

6. Louvigny au ministre, 3 octobre 1715, AC, C 11 A, vol. 35, pp. 220 - 223; Louvigny au ministre, 26 octobre 1715, Ibid., pp. 224v - 230. These two dispatches appear to be largely a repetition of what Louvigny stated orally in 1714.

7. Observation sur la guerre des Renards, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 34, pp. 125 - 125v.

8. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 19 mars 1714, AC, B, vol. 36, p. 345.

9. Le ministre à Ramezay, 3 mai 1714, Ibid., p. 379.

10. Observation sur la guerre des Renards, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 34, p. 122v, p. 124; Le ministre à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 3 mai 1714, AC, B, vol. 34, pp. 380 - 382.

Stoppage of the fur trade, which Pontchartrain feared as one of the principal results of war, had almost occurred in 1714. Out of fear of the Fox the allies were staying close to their villages and neglecting their hunting.¹¹ Some of them were also becoming annoyed with the French for their prolonged inactivity and it appeared possible that they might conclude an independent agreement with the Fox.¹² Sweeping the region of the Lakes clear of the latter now appeared as the only solution to the western problem. Soon after his return to Canada, Louvigny met with Vaudreuil, Bégon, Ramezay and d'Aigremont to plan the elaborate diplomatic preliminaries to war.

Basically, this diplomacy aimed at isolating the Fox and turning as many as possible of the western tribes against them. The first step was to conclude a peace treaty between the Illinois and Ouyatanons. These two nations disliked the Fox but these feelings could not be turned to advantage as long as they persisted in fighting each other.¹³ Furthermore, while this war continued, the Ouyatanons were obliged to remain on good terms with the Fox and their allies. The latter, and more particularly the Kikapous, might well capitalize on this situation by obliging the Ouyatanons to cover their rear while they harassed Detroit. Such a diversion would almost certainly prevent the numerous Indians settled at that post from joining Louvigny and this would greatly reduce the

11. Ramezay au ministre, 18 septembre 1714, AC, C 11 A, vol. 34, p. 355v.

12. Ibid., pp. 355v - 356; Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 20 septembre 1714, Ibid., p. 244.

13. Ibid., pp. 242 - 242v.

size of his army. Under such conditions, such close neighbours of the Fox as the Sakis, Puants, and Folles Avoines, who sided with them out of fear, might refuse to cast their lot with the French.¹⁴ Everything, then, hinged on a peace settlement between the Ouyatanons and Illinois, and to make such a conciliation easier gifts were sent to Vincennes and de Liettes for distribution among them.¹⁵ Meanwhile, Louvigny, who had been appointed commander-in-chief, was to leave for Michilimackinac with twenty soldiers to garrison the post and gifts and ammunition to rally the Indians of the outlying areas. Dupuy would leave for Detroit at the same time on a similar mission. Lignery, commanding at Michilimackinac, was to send an emissary to the Sioux to encourage those Indians to break the peace they had recently concluded with the Fox. Even if these multiple preliminary manoeuvres succeeded it was understood that Louvigny would not mobilize his army before having made a final effort for a peaceful settlement.¹⁶

Vaudreuil's departure for France in September, 1714, left Ramezay in charge of the military operations which were scheduled to begin the following spring. The project as a whole, however, suffered a serious blow during the winter when Louvigny was disabled by disease. This officer's extensive knowledge of the Great Lakes country and his reputation among the Indians of that region made him practically indispensable for the difficult task at hand. Still, Ramezay was not in the mood to consider a postponement.

14. Vaudreuil au ministre, 16 septembre 1714, Ibid., pp. 285v - 286.

15. Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 20 septembre 1714, Ibid., p. 242v.

16. Ibid., pp. 243 - 244v.

The gifts had been distributed to the Ouyatanons and Illinois and both nations had finally agreed to assist the French.¹⁷ The interim governor obviously considered it important to capitalize on this juncture while it existed by taking immediate action. Unfortunately, his precipitation may also have been caused by information received from Albany, and later proven false, that twelve French canoemen and a Jesuit had been slain by a party of Fox warriors.¹⁸ The most disgraceful fiasco in the military history of New France now began to unfold.

Final arrangements called for the army to march in two separate groups and meet at a point near the Fox stronghold. Lignery, who had replaced Louvigny as commander-in-chief, was to set out from Michilimackinac at the head of the coureurs, Canadian volunteers and northwestern allies. Meantime, Maunoir and Dadoncour, the sons of Ramezay and Longueuil, would be mustering the southern tribes. The young officers, whose prestigious family names would, it was hoped, contribute to the success of their mission, were to instruct the Detroit Indians to proceed to Chicago and wait there until they arrived with the Illinois and Ouyatanons. Together, they would then rendez-vous with Lignery. This final junction before moving into action was scheduled to occur at the end of August.¹⁹

The plan's failure to materialize was caused by so many factors

17. Ramezay et Bégon au ministre, 13 septembre 1715, AC, C 11 A, vol. 35, pp. 6v - 7.

18. Ramezay et Bégon au ministre, 12 novembre 1714, AC, C 11 A, vol. 34, p. 364v; Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 13 septembre 1715, AC, C 11 A, vol. 35, p. 5v.

19. Ibid., pp. 7 - 8v.

that the blame cannot be laid to anyone in particular. One of the basic flaws was obviously the strategy itself which was far too complicated, particularly for an age when commanders were out of touch with each other. To make matters worse still, Ramezay blundered the timing. Lignery could not leave Michilimackinac until supplies had arrived from Montreal. Since the voyage to the post usually required two months, Ramezay delayed the departure of the convoy until May 30. A shortage of food at Michilimackinac, which was serious enough to oblige the French to purchase corn from the Iroquois, was apparently the reason why he did not allow for a greater safety margin. The convoy, however, was a considerable one and Ramezay should have foreseen possible delay along the way. Commanded by Deschaillons de St.Ours, with la Noue and Belestre as subordinates, it carried the Michilimackinac garrison of twenty soldiers and was weighed down with equipment for the impending campaign.²⁰ Ramezay was soon informed of its sluggish advance up the Ottawa river by canoes arriving from the Upper country. Hurriedly, he sent word to Lignery to purchase what supplies he could at Michilimackinac and set out at once.²¹ When this message arrived on August 6, the commander-in-chief was no longer the master of the situation. Indeed, it is doubtful if he ever completely had been. The trading permits issued to all those who had agreed to fight in the war had resulted in a large scale invasion of the West by traders, most of whom never took the

20. Ramezay et Bégon au ministre, 13 septembre 1715, AC, C 11 A, vol. 35, pp. 8v - 9.

21. Ramezay au ministre, 28 octobre 1715, Ibid., p. 88.

trouble of reporting to Lignery for duty.²² The coureurs who did assemble at that post brought a large stock of brandy with them. In the words of la Périère, an officer who was there at the time, Michilimackinac was transformed into "un enfer ouvert" and similar scenes of drunkenness and disorder were re-enacted throughout the West, wherever French and Indians came together.²³ By August 30 Deschailions had still not arrived and it was now learned that the Detroit traders who were supposed to join the expedition had gone to Montreal instead to market their stock of pelts. With those of Michilimackinac anxious to follow their example Lignery gave up the whole enterprise in disgust.²⁴ When the much delayed Deschailions finally appeared on September 10²⁵ he may well have found the post deserted.

While the northern army was breaking up before even being fully assembled, Maunoir and Dadoncour were failing in their mission. The Ouyatanons were suffering from an epidemic of measles when the French officers arrived among them, and only twenty agreed to follow Dadoncour to Chicago instead of the two hundred he had hoped to raise. No one was there when they arrived after an exhausting journey of one hundred and thirty leagues across the prairies and the Indians turned back. Shortly afterwards Maunoir arrived at Chicago with four hundred and fifty Illinois. These Indians also grew disheartened at the sight of the deserted meeting place and headed for home before the junction with the Detroit contingent

22. Louvigny au ministre, 26 octobre 1715, Ibid., p. 224v.

23. Ibid., p. 225.

24. Louvigny au ministre, 3 octobre 1715, Ibid., pp. 221 - 221v; Ramezay et Bégon au ministre, 7 novembre 1715, Ibid., pp. 16v - 17.

25. Louvigny au ministre, 26 octobre 1715, Ibid., p. 228v.

could be effected.²⁶ This last group, which was accompanied by the Huron interpreter, Pachot, and several mission Iroquois, was both surprised and disappointed at finding no one at the rendezvous and began to search for Maunoir and Dadoncour. They finally located them among the Kaskaskias, an Illinois sub-tribe, but both were so ill that they were unable to take command of the allies when it was learned that a large party of Kikapous and Maskoutins were hunting on a nearby river. Fortunately Pachot and Bisailon, the last a renegade, replaced them, attacked the enemy, and killed several of their number for the only success of a dismal campaign.²⁷ Its final tragic episode was written in the spring of 1716. While returning to Canada, Maunoir and Dadoncour were set upon and killed by a band of Cherokees.²⁸

As news of this series of disasters filtered back to the colony, Ramezay turned to Louvigny, who by now had sufficiently recovered from his illness, and asked him to assume command of a new campaign in 1716. Louvigny, then as always, was strongly opposed to an Indian war whose consequences might prove far-reaching and disastrous. Furthermore, the events of 1715 had disheartened the allies and added to the pride of the Fox. More than ever he doubted what could be achieved unless the attacking force consisted of a large number of disciplined Frenchmen,²⁹ but, because of the expense

26. Ramezay et Bégon au ministre, 7 novembre 1715, Ibid., pp. 45v - 47v.

27. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 14 octobre 1716, AC, C 11 A, vol. 36, pp. 71v - 73.

28. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 12 octobre 1717, AC, C 11 A, vol. 38, pp. 101 - 101v.

29. Louvigny au ministre, 3 octobre 1715, AC, C 11 A, vol. 35, p. 223.

involved the Council of the Marine, no more than Pontchartrain, could accede to such a request.³⁰ Once again the ranks would have to be filled with those amnestied coureurs and volunteers whose behaviour in 1715 had compromised French prestige among the allies and been one of the chief causes of the failure of the expedition. This time it was hoped that Louvigny's presence would reduce the French and Indians to discipline. To further reduce the possibility of failure, the multiple junctions on which the operations of 1715 had foundered were reduced to a minimum.

On May 1, 1716, Louvigny and two hundred and twenty-five French volunteers left Montreal on their way to Michilimackinac and Detroit where more coureurs and contingents of Indians were scheduled to join them. Louvigny's arrival at Michilimackinac, anxiously awaited since 1710, electrified the Indians and instilled new confidence into the French who were assembled there. The army, which had grown to four hundred Frenchmen and a like number of Indians by the time it left Detroit, moved swiftly and in good order. At an unstated date, probably late July, it arrived before the Fox stronghold which was defended by five hundred warriors and three thousand women.³¹

The siege was conducted in classical fashion. While two small cannons and a mortar battered the fortifications a trench was opened some thirty toises from the outworks and the besiegers

30. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 15 juin 1716, AC, B, vol. 38, pp. 221v - 222.

31. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 14 octobre 1716, AC, C 11 A, vol. 36, pp. 73 - 73v; Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 30 octobre 1716, Ibid., pp. 59 - 60.

burrowed forward from there. In two days they had reached the palisade.. With the French now preparing to explode mines beneath their fortifications, the Fox decided to ask for quarter. After consulting with representatives of the allies Louvigny decided to grant this request, but he laid down stringent conditions. The Fox were to conclude peace with all the nations trading to New France and oblige the Kikapous and Maskoutins to do the same. They were also obliged to release all the prisoners they held and replace by slaves the allies killed during the war. Finally, they had to deliver enough pelts to the French to cover the cost of Louvigny's expedition against them. To insure the execution of these articles, six notables were delivered to the French as hostages and taken back to Canada.³² Rather than press for the destruction of the Fox and risk prolonging the war for several years more, Louvigny had preferred a peace treaty which seemed likely to restore immediate order.

The results of this peace were soon evident. Now that the Fox menace was eliminated, the allies felt free to resume their hunting expeditions and considerable quantities of pelts reached the colony in 1717. Several coureurs also decided to profit from their amnesty by returning to Canada.³³ Moreover, Vaudreuil, who had arrived from France in September 1716, was now in a position to implement the policy of expansion he had promoted during his voyage to France. During the next four years, in what must be accounted the greatest period of expansion in the history of New

32. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 14 octobre 1716, Ibid., pp. 74 - 74v.

33. Copie d'une lettre de Louvigny à S.A.S. Mgr. le comte de Toulouse, 1 octobre 1717, AC, C 11 A, vol. 37, pp. 325 - 326.

France, the West was systematically occupied by means of a network of strategically located and interrelated posts.

Vaudreuil's purpose in founding these posts provides a good reflection on the intermediate position he occupies in the history of French North American imperialism. While his aims are no longer the purely economic ones of the seventeenth century, anti-English designs are not yet the dominant theme they will later become. The governor seems to have thought that the best way of coping with English pressure in the interior was to build a zone of French influence in the region of lake Michigan where the allied tribes might re-group. The Ouyatanons and their kinsmen the Miamis were especially vulnerable to English diplomacy. To escape the inconveniences of the Fox war the first of these two tribes had migrated from Chicago and the Teakiki river toward the Wabash. The Miamis, for much the same reasons, had removed from the St. Joseph River and relocated in the vicinity of Lake Erie, quite close to the Iroquois. To lure them back to their former village, ten soldiers and one sergeant under Deschaillons de St.Ours, captain, and Montmidy, ensign, left the colony in 1717 to re-establish the post of St.Joseph des Miamis, abandoned since 1696.³⁴ Vincennes, who had been living with the Miamis fairly regularly since 1712, was to encourage them to re-settle near this fort. At approximately the same time four soldiers, three voyageurs and a blacksmith, under the command of Belestre, ensign, left to settle among the Ouyatanons. They were instructed to urge those Indians to return to Chicago and the Teakiki river.³⁵ Whatever their

34. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 12 octobre 1717, AC, C 11 A, vol. 124, pp. 48 - 48v.

35. Ibid., pp. 46v - 47.

decision might be, Vaudreuil intended sending a captain among these Indians in 1718.

This policy of relocation met with little success. Some fifty Ouyatanons moved to the Teakiki but soon rejoined their nation when it refused to follow their example.³⁶ Similarly, only one hundred Miamis moved to fort St. Joseph, where several Poutouatamis had already settled. The others flatly stated that they would not budge from their new village, where hunting was plentiful and protection could be had from the Fox and their allies who had gone back to war in 1719.³⁷ With the English waiting to capitalize on any flaw in the French system, Vaudreuil decided to have permanent posts erected among these two nations. These were completed by 1721 and placed under the command of the experienced du Buisson.³⁸ Vincennes, the expert on Miami affairs, had died in 1719.

The second basic purpose of the Western posts, which Vaudreuil considered no less important than the first, was the preservation of peace among the allies. In pursuance of this policy, three were built in 1718. The first was constructed at Green Bay, in the heart of Fox country. This settlement was expected to contain this troublesome nation and also secure a passageway into the rich

36. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 22 octobre 1720, AC, C 11 A, vol. 42, pp. 166v - 167; Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 6 octobre 1721, AC, C 11 A, vol. 43, p. 328v.

37. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 22 octobre 1720, AC, C 11 A, vol. 42, pp. 167v - 168; Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 6 octobre 1721, AC, C 11 A, vol. 43, pp. 328 - 328v.

38. Ibid., p. 329; Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 24 octobre 1722, AC, C 11 A, vol. 44, pp. 366 - 366v.

beaver territory of the Sioux.³⁹ A second post was built at Pimitoui, among the Illinois, primarily to preserve peace between this nation and the Ouyatanons.⁴⁰ The third was planted at Chagouamigon, a piece of land jutting into lake Superior, in order to contain the Saulteurs who had old scores to settle with the Fox.⁴¹ To increase the possibility of concerted action between all the commanding officers and also to repress disorder among the French and the Indians, Louvigny was appointed commander-in-chief of the Upper Country and instructed to carry out biennial inspection tours.⁴² Unfortunately, this systematic policy of expansion and all it implied from the point of view of Indian diplomacy, economic profit, and protection against English infiltration was dealt a hard blow in 1717 by the Court's decision to annex the Illinois country to Louisiana.

The shuffling of the Canada-Louisiana boundary was one of the many changes that occurred in the organization and administration of France's colonial possessions during the tenure of the Council of the Marine. The most important of these changes had taken place in 1717 when the Company of the Indies was incorporated and granted proprietary rights over Louisiana. For several years there had also been persistent reports of rich silver deposits in the Illinois country. This was the factor which determined the home

39. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 12 octobre 1717, AC, C 11 A, vol. 124, pp. 49 - 50.

40. Ibid., pp. 50 - 50v.

41. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 28 octobre 1719, AC, C 11 A, vol. 40, p. 179.

42. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 2 juin 1720, AC, B, vol. 42, pp. 431 - 431v.

authorities to place the area under the jurisdiction of Louisiana⁴³ in order to increase the economic potential of the southern colony on which the success of John Law's système so largely depended. While Canada was not greatly concerned with this underground wealth the boundaries of the Illinois country presented an issue of vital interest. From Canada's point of view this territory ended at the Illinois River where the lands of the Fox and Maskoutins began. The commanding officer whom the Louisiana authorities had sent to the Illinois, however, was under the impression that this territory extended past the Illinois River along the entire length of the Mississippi and tributary streams as far as Lake Winnipeg. Should this point of view prevail the numerous tribes inhabiting the regions of the Upper Mississippi would become Louisiana dependents and their commerce might well be lost to Canada.⁴⁴ The fears expressed since the days of Callières that Louisiana would compete with Canada for the commerce of the interior were now enormously increased.

It is true that such apprehensions were largely unfounded. So many obstacles hindered the transportation of trade goods from the Gulf of Mexico to the Upper Mississippi that Louisiana could never compete with Canada on a large scale for the commerce of the West. Vaudreuil himself would later state that the Illinois country was largely dependent on Canada for supplies⁴⁵ and the

43. See the comments of the Council of the Marine on Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 12 octobre 1717, AC, C 11 A, vol. 124, p. 50v.

44. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 4 novembre 1720, AC, C 11 A, vol. 43, pp. 102v - 106v.

45. Copie d'une lettre de Vaudreuil à Boisbriant du 20 mai 1724, AC, C 11 A, vol. 56, p. 255v.

Council of the Marine itself believed that pelts would waste if they remained exposed to the tropical heats of the Lower Mississippi for any length of time.⁴⁶ Nonetheless Canada's suspicions were aroused. Since its earliest days Louisiana had served as a refuge for renegades and runaway habitants. With the Illinois lost to Canada defections were made much easier. Vaudreuil, as soon as he heard of the annexation, asked the Court to renew orders forbidding Louisiana to shelter Canadians.⁴⁷ Although the home authorities complied⁴⁸ the problem was not solved. Canadian voyageurs continued to defect to the junior colony, often taking the merchandise of their employers with them. The attitude of the commanding officer, Boisbriant, was also a cause of grievance. This officer, perhaps because he refused to accept Canada's definition of the Illinois country, was issuing permits to Louisiana merchants authorizing them to trade with the tribes depending on Canada. Vaudreuil protested and warned Boisbriant that these traders exposed themselves to having their goods confiscated. The threat must have been carried out for complaints on this matter began reaching the home authorities.⁴⁹

Another inconvenience stemming from the loss of the Illinois

46. Observation du Conseil de la Marine sur une lettre de Vaudreuil du 4 novembre 1720, AC, C 11 A, vol. 43, pp. 106v - 107.

47. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 26 octobre 1719, AC, C 11 A, vol. 40, pp. 53 - 53v.

48. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 2 juin 1720, AC, B, vol. 42, p. 427.

49. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 11 octobre 1723, AC, C 11 A, vol. 45, pp. 151 - 154v.

was the partial disruption of Canada's policy of occupation. Vaudreuil was now obliged to remove the officer and garrison he had sent to the Pimitoui in order to make way for a staff that would receive orders from New Orleans.⁵⁰ Placing the western Indians under this type of divided control was probably the most undesirable result of the aggrandizement of Louisiana. Concerted action between the various tribes, which was already difficult enough, might now prove completely impossible. Furthermore, apparently out of economic interest, the Louisiana traders were interfering with Vaudreuil's Ouyatanons policy. They encouraged those Indians to reject his entreaties to move to the Teakiki and urged them to remain where they were, close to the Kaskaskias.⁵¹ These multiple difficulties between the two colonies came to a head in the 1720's with the recurrence of the Fox war.

At first it had seemed possible that the treaty concluded in 1716 between New France and the Fox might bring permanent peace to the West. Louvigny was very well received by these Indians when he arrived in their village in 1717 to lead a delegation back to Montreal for a solemn execution of the articles of peace. Despite the fact that an epidemic of smallpox had carried off two of the six hostages who had been taken back to the colony the previous year, the Fox renewed their pledge to keep the peace. Because of the hazard the outbreak of smallpox presented, however, they asked to be allowed to put off their journey to Montreal until the

50. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 26 octobre 1719, AC, C 11 A, vol. 40, p. 52v.

51. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 22 octobre 1720, AC, C 11 A, vol. 42, p. 166v.

following year. Faithful to their promise, five of the leading chiefs and a few notables arrived in the colony on July 20, 1718. In the presence of representatives from several other tribes they made their submission to Vaudreuil, but stated they found it impossible to execute all the conditions laid down by the peace treaty. The governor himself believed that this might prove too difficult. He therefore accepted their submission and released twelve of the seventeen Fox prisoners detained in the colony. He reminded them that they also were obliged to free the prisoners who might still be held among them.⁵²

Vaudreuil's anxiety to conciliate the Fox can be explained by the recurrence of war between the Illinois, Maskoutins, and Kikapous. He made it clear to the Fox that, as one of the conditions of peace, he expected them to oblige their allies to break off hostilities with the Illinois.⁵³ For a time it appeared that the tactic might succeed. In 1719, three Fox notables arrived in the colony with a leading chief of the Kikapous. The latter assured the governor that his people and the Maskoutins had released all their prisoners and now wanted to live at peace.⁵⁴ Despite these promising words their relations with the Illinois continued to deteriorate and the Fox themselves, despite their efforts to arbitrate a settlement, were provoked on several occasions. Then, late in 1719, a full scale war broke out. While on a hunting

52. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 30 octobre 1718, AC, C 11 A, vol. 39, pp. 143v - 148; Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 11 novembre 1718, Ibid., pp. 110 - 111v.

53. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 11 novembre 1718, Ibid., pp. 111 - 111v.

54. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 26 octobre 1719, AC, C 11 A, vol. 40, p. 44.

expedition, a group of Fox, Kikapous, and Maskoutins ran headlong into a war party of forty Illinois. In the battle which followed, twenty of the latter were killed and twenty others carried off as prisoners. Encouraged by this success and angry at the Illinois, the Fox and their allies lost no time in carrying hostilities into enemy territory. These developments dashed Vaudreuil's hope of restoring peace in the West. Because the war was being waged outside Canada's jurisdiction he informed the court that the responsibility for restoring peace now devolved upon Louisiana.⁵⁵

Such is Vaudreuil's account of the beginnings of the war and there is no reason to doubt that it is an honest account of the externals of the case. Yet, the fundamentals of the problem appear to have escaped him. For one thing it is most significant that the recurrence of war should coincide with Canada's greatest moments of expansion and more particularly with efforts to penetrate the Sioux tribes. After establishing his post at Kaministigoya early in 1718, as a first step toward the discovery of the western sea, Lanoue had promptly dispatched Pachot to the Sioux.⁵⁶ These Indians at first appeared friendly to the French and even promised to stop fighting their old enemies, the Crees. Yet, no sooner had Pachot returned to Kaministigoya than a Sioux war party killed seventeen of the Indians settled near that post. The interpreter immediately retraced his footsteps and urged the Sioux to properly compensate the injured tribe. The Fox, however, had preceded him. "Les Renards avoient tellement prévenu les Sioux

55. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 28 octobre 1719, Ibid., pp. 180 - 182.

56. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 14 octobre 1719, AC, C 11 A, vol. 40, pp. 84 - 84v.

contre les François en leur faisant entendre qu'ils vouloient les trahir qu'il a été impossible de les dissuader."⁵⁷

It is therefore Canada's western sea policy, and not English intrigue as is traditionally believed, that appears as the key to Fox behaviour during this period. As the frontier rolled westward the great middlemen tribes of the seventeenth century fell by the wayside but other similar alignments situated farther in the interior surged before the European and sought to block his advance. These were the motives to which the Fox were responding. Vaudreuil had understood that this nation controlled the gateway to the Far West but he had not realized that they were determined to protect it against all intruders, French and Indian alike. Only in 1725 did Longueuil report that the Fox "ne laisseront pas passer les François pour aller aux Sioux parce que le commerce que les François y feroient diminueroit considérablement celui qu'ils font eux-mêmes."⁵⁸ No less than Canada, perhaps even more, Louisiana also suffered from this state of affairs. "Ces mêmes Renards sont cause qu'on ne peut aller aux Sioux," stated Boisbriant, "d'où on tireroit une quantité prodigieuse de castor. Ces derniers m'ont fait demander par les Missouris à venir trafiquer, mais comme les Renards sont sur leur chemin et plus fort qu'eux ils les obligent non seulement de n'y point commercer mais encore à nous faire la guerre." To throw the Far West open, Boisbriant urged that Vaudreuil destroy the Fox.⁵⁹

57. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 4 novembre 1720, AC, C 11 A, vol. 43, pp. 99 - 100v.

58. Longueuil et Bégon au ministre, 31 octobre 1725, AC, C 11 A, vol. 47, p. 134.

59. Boisbriant, Mémoire du poste des Illinois, février 1725, AC, C 13 A, vol. 8, pp. 449 - 449v.

The governor of Canada was not prepared to follow such a policy. Fox obstruction to French expansionism had not created a shortage of beaver and menues pelleteries in Canada. The existing chain of posts which extended in a wide arc from fort Frontenac to Kaministigoya represented a rich source of alternate supply and for the moment Vaudreuil was prepared to let the Fox alone as long as they limited their hostilities to the Illinois, a nation dependent on Louisiana. In 1720, however, with war spreading to the Canadian tribes, it seemed that he would be forced to intervene. For no apparent reason a Miami was killed while visiting with the Sakis. A Poutouatami chief now informed Alphonse de Tonty, commander at Detroit, that with Vaudreuil's permission he could raise one thousand warriors to attack the Fox. The fact that these Indians appeared willing to wage war without insisting on French assistance appealed to the governor. He now advised the court that, unless the Fox concluded peace by 1721, he would consent to the expedition.⁶⁰ Far from breaking off hostilities by that date, the Fox were turning against the Saulteurs and Poutouatamis. The latter grew so enraged that Montmidy, commanding at Fort St. Joseph, experienced great difficulty in holding them at bay until Vaudreuil should make his intentions known. Seeing no hope for a peaceful settlement the governor informed the court that he had instructed the commanders in the various posts to let the Indians strike.⁶¹ Just as the West appeared on the brink of another general war the situation abruptly changed. By 1723, the possibility

60. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 22 octobre 1720, AC, C 11 A, vol. 42, pp. 164v - 166v.

61. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 6 octobre 1721, AC, C 11 A, vol. 43, pp. 326 - 326v.

of an all-out attack had vanished.

At first Vaudreuil attempted to explain this novel development by claiming that the allies had quickly lost their early ardour for war. The Detroit Indians had begun to fear that such an expedition could not succeed unless the French came to their help. Alleging the considerable expense involved, the governor had flatly refused them this assistance.⁶² The reduced aid of thirty or forty volunteers which he did offer had not satisfied the Detroit tribes. When a Poutouatami chief invited them to march they indicated in reply that they would only do so if the French led the way.⁶³ Their reluctance to fight was said to have increased in 1723 when they learned that a group of Indians settled on Saguinam Bay, off lake Huron, had attacked the Fox and killed seventeen of their number. In order to gain immunity from the large war parties the Green Bay Indians began sending against the Saulteurs, those of Detroit utterly repudiated the action and loudly announced their intention of remaining at peace.⁶⁴

The failure of the Canadian tribes and of Canada itself to intervene in the war was exasperating Louisiana and increasing the ill feelings between the two colonies. Outside of some isolated incidents Canada, until 1723, had not suffered from the war to any great extent and its western empire continued to function normally both economically and diplomatically. The case was different

62. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 22 octobre 1722, AC, C 11 A, vol. 124, pp. 632v - 633.

63. Vaudreuil au ministre, 11 octobre 1723, AC, C 11 A, vol. 45, p. 147.

64. Vaudreuil au ministre, 2 octobre 1723, Ibid., pp. 136 - 137.

where Louisiana was concerned. Since 1719 the full fury of the Fox had been directed against the Illinois Indians and the French inhabitants of Fort de Chartres, the Tamarois and Kaskaskias,⁶⁵ but the province was so impoverished that it found it most difficult to strike back. Boisbriant complained that for lack of appropriate gifts in ammunition and merchandise the support of the Missouri tribes could not be enlisted.⁶⁶ Because of its destitute condition the province was incapable of following Canada's example and developing its own chain of posts. The area of the Upper Wabash, one of the more strategic points in North America, was deserted. Because of the failure of the Louisiana authorities to restore old Fort St. Louis, the Fox had succeeded in driving Illinois from the site.⁶⁷ As a result of all this Upper Louisiana lay practically defenseless. In 1723 the Louisiana council pointed out that the ultimate defeat of the Fox hinged largely on Canada's help.⁶⁸ Far from this happening, this body complained, Canadian traders settled at Green Bay were reportedly trafficking arms and ammunition to the Fox and their allies.⁶⁹

The ministry of the marine was also growing annoyed with Vaudreuil's attitude toward the Fox. It was being noised in court circles that the sudden pacifism of the Detroit Indians was due

65. Extrait d'une lettre de M. de Chassin, 1 juillet 1722, AC, C 13 A, vol. 6, p. 298.

66. Boisbriant à la Compagnie des Indes, 2 octobre 1722, Ibid., p. 407v.

67. Le Conseil de la Louisiane à la Compagnie des Indes, 24 janvier 1723, Ibid., p. 394; Réponse à une autre lettre du 12 mai 1722 et du 24 janvier 1723, Ibid., p. 396.

68. Le Conseil de la Louisiane à la Compagnie des Indes, 24 janvier 1723, Ibid., p. 394v.

69. Ibid., p. 394v.

to Linctôt who, while replacing Tonty as commander of the post, had forbidden the Indians to go to war.⁷⁰ The minister Morville chided Vaudreuil for his indifference toward Louisiana's plight.⁷¹ His successor Frédéric de Maurepas, whose impatience with the governor of Canada manifested itself on a number of occasions, was more cutting in his remarks:

Il m'est revenu de bonne part que les commandans que vous avez placé au Détroit et dans les pays d'en haut, bien loin d'engager les sauvages voisins de la nation des Renards à leur faire la guerre, et à les détruire, empêchent les autres sauvages d'aller en guerre sur cette nation... Comme il n'y a que l'intérêt particulier qui puisse faire agir les commandans de cette manière... [Sa Majesté] m'a ordonné de vous faire savoir qu'Elle vous rendra responsable de la conduite de ces commandans si vous ne tenez pas la main à ce que sa volonté soit ponctuellement exécutée à cet égard. Vous devez savoir mieux que personne que la nation des Renards fait un tort très considérable à la colonie de la Louisiane... Il me semble que cette seule raison est assez forte pour devoir vous engager à contribuer de votre part à faire finir cette guerre puisque les [habitants] de la Louisiane sont également sujets de Sa Ma'té que ceux du Canada et que vous ne devez faire aucune différence contre eux.⁷²

Faced with this highly critical attitude on the part of the minister, Vaudreuil submitted a detailed defense of his policy, something he had never felt required to do when the Council of the Marine was in power. In this dispatch to Maurepas he shifted the

70. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 11 octobre 1723, AC, C 11 A, vol. 45, pp. 146v - 147.

71. Ibid., pp. 146 - 146v.

72. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 16 août 1724, AC, B, vol. 47, pp. 1225 - 1226.

blame for the war to the Illinois Indians. Instead of returning the Fox prisoners in 1716, as was customary after conclusion of a peace treaty, these Indians had detained them and put several to death. They had persisted in their provocative ways even while the Fox were attempting to arbitrate a settlement between them, the Kikapous and the Maskoutins. Had the officers sent by Louisiana among the Illinois been more familiar with Indian ways and had they obliged these Indians to respond to the peace overtures of the Fox, Vaudreuil thought that war would have ended long ago. He did not deny that the officers commanding in the Canadian posts were preventing their Indians from attacking the Fox. "J'ai toujours recommandé aux officiers que j'ai détaché dans ces postes de concilier les esprits et réunir les nations divisées afin de maintenir ces peuples en l'union," he stated. Peace must always be preferred to the uncertainties of a war which might cause the colony incalculable harm commercially, financially, and diplomatically. Putting an end to the depredations of the Fox was of course necessary but, he added, this would have to be achieved by diplomacy rather than by war. If the officers on duty among the Illinois were prepared to co-operate with those of Canada Vaudreuil thought that this might still be achieved. As a first step in this direction he had sent Lignery to Green Bay with instructions to restore peace between the Fox, Illinois and Saulteurs.⁷³

From this statement it becomes clear that Vaudreuil had no desire for going to war on behalf of Louisiana, a colony which he

73. Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 octobre 1724, AC, C 11 A, vol. 46, pp. 90 - 93v.

disliked and distrusted, and risk a defeat which might jeopardize at a single stroke everything Canada had painstakingly achieved in the West. At a time when New York's pressure on the Lakes was increasing, this would almost certainly prove fatal to the colony. Yet, it will no doubt be remembered that the governor had not always been so peacefully inclined. He had been one of the leading warhawks of 1714, clamouring for the destruction of the Fox and even pronouncing a permanent state of war in the West as the most effective way to forestall the English. In 1714, however, the French had everything to gain in those regions while in 1724 they had everything to lose. The Canadian merchant class now had an enormous stake in the West and Vaudreuil must certainly have felt their pressure in the course of everyday life. Moreover, many of the arguments used by the governor to justify his peace policy suggest that Louvigny, his close collaborator, had gained considerable ascendancy over him. Louvigny's pacifism was well known. By 1720 he had reached the conclusion that the French should refuse to participate in Indian quarrels and limit themselves to the role of mediator.⁷⁴ Whether the court might finally have been won to this way of thinking is not known. In the summer of 1724 Lignery concluded a peace treaty between the Fox and the Saulteurs and, with what appeared as cynical disregard for Louisiana's interests, allowed the war with the Illinois to continue. A wave of indignation now swept through the southern colony and the ministry of the marine.

The peace concluded by Lignery was principally dictated by

74. Louvigny au Conseil de la Marine, 15 octobre 1720, AC, C 11 A, vol. 42, p. 239v.

the growing necessity of breaking down the Fox barrier which kept the French from penetrating to the Sioux.⁷⁵ In 1722, for the first time, it was reported that beaver was growing scarce in the regions already occupied and this made it urgent to push on into the Northwest.⁷⁶ Another reason for doing so was the interest taken by the Duke of Orleans, Regent of France, in the problem of the Western Sea. In 1720 he had commissioned Father Charlevoix to inquire into the problem of the discovery.⁷⁷ After making his celebrated journey from Quebec to the Gulf of Mexico the Jesuit reported that either of two methods might be used to achieve the desired result: exploring the Missouri River to its source or establishing a mission among the Sioux. Since these Indians were at war with the tribes farther West, information on the Western Sea might be obtained from prisoners brought back by their war parties.⁷⁸ Charlevoix himself favoured this second method and the Regent accepted his suggestion.⁷⁹ Unfortunately, the continuing hostility of the nomadic Sioux kept the project from being launched.⁸⁰ To quell this opposition Vaudreuil felt that the first step was to conclude peace between the Fox and the Saulteurs who had been at war since 1723. This being done the route to the Sioux

75. Copie d'une lettre de Vaudreuil à de Boisbriant, 17 août 1724, AC, C 11 A, vol. 56, p. 255.

76. Pachot, Mémoire pour l'établissement de Tekamamiouen et des Scious, octobre 1722, AC, C 11 E, vol. 16, pp. 79 - 79v.

77. Conseil de la Marine à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 7 juin 1720, AC, B, vol. 42, p. 448.

78. Charlevoix au comte de Morville, ministre et secrétaire d'Etat, 1 avril 1723, AC, C 11 E, vol. 16, pp. 106 - 107v.

79. Observation sur une lettre de Charlevoix à Morville, 11 mai 1723, Ibid., pp. 108 - 108v.

80. Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 14 octobre 1723, AC, C 11 A, vol. 45, pp. 25v - 27v.

would lie open and French diplomacy could be directly brought to bear on those Indians.⁸¹

These were sound reasons for the peace treaty. Nonetheless, Lignery's failure to put an end to war between the Fox and the Illinois and worst still, his neglect to arrange simply for a truce between them appeared unjustifiable. In his own defense he claimed that the Fox had absolutely refused to suspend hostilities. They had too often been needlessly provoked since 1716 and furthermore, they had never obtained full satisfaction from the Illinois in the matter of their prisoners.²² Both he and Vaudreuil claimed that before any form of understanding could be reached, all the Fox prisoners still detained by the Illinois would have to be released.⁸³ When questioned on this subject by the Louisiana authorities, however, the Illinois indignantly denied ever having provoked the Fox and assured them that they had released all their prisoners long ago.⁸⁴ Three missionaries ministering to these tribes supported this statement.⁸⁵ The feeling now grew that Canada was refusing to intervene out of a desire to prolong the war. The Canadian traders settled in the region of Green Bay were reportedly

81. Copie d'une lettre de Vaudreuil à de Boisbriant du 14 janvier 1725, AC, C 11 A, vol. 56, pp. 255 - 255v.

82. Copie de la lettre de Lignery à Boisbriant et du Tisé du 23 août 1724, Ibid., pp. 257 - 258.

83. Copie d'une lettre de Vaudreuil à Boisbriant du 17 août 1724, Ibid., pp. 256 - 256v.

84. Copie de la harangue faite par un chef Illinois au Chat Blanc, chef Saki, concernant la guerre des Renards, s.d., Ibid., pp. 252 - 252v.

85. Copie d'une lettre des Pères Boulanger, Kerebin et Thomur, missionnaires, du 10 janvier 1725, à M. du Tisé, Ibid., pp. 267 - 267v.

encouraging the Fox, Kikapous and Maskoutins to carry on the war by telling them that the whites of Canada and those of Louisiana were of different nations.⁸⁶ Vaudreuil was directly accused of conniving at these tactics in order to prevent Louisiana from sharing in the western fur trade.⁸⁷

Maurepas, who was already impatient with Vaudreuil, now became exasperated. Already, in May 1725, he had curtly ordered the governor to remove Amariton from command at Green Bay and replace him by a more qualified officer.⁸⁸ This marked the first time that the court had openly questioned Vaudreuil's administration of the West. A month later, he informed the governor of the nature of the complaints reaching him from Louisiana. "On dit que vous ne regardez pas les François de la Louisiane comme François, que vous ne vous souciez pas que les sauvages les regardent de même, et qu'en faisant continuer cette guerre vous voulez empescher les sauvages de porter leurs pelleteries du costé de cette nouvelle colonie et les faire tomber toutes en Canada." Maurepas suggested that Vaudreuil, in his own interest, take appropriate measures to

86. "Les traitteurs de vos quartiers leur [the Fox] font entendre que nous sommes d'autres blancs, ces sortes de gens pour avoir du castor sacrifient leur patry." Copie de la lettre de du Tisé du 14 janvier 1725 à Vaudreuil, *Ibid.*, p. 268; also de la Chaise, de Boisbriant et Fleuriau à la Compagnie des Indes, 27 juillet 1725, AC, C 13 A, vol. 9, p. 60.

87. "Vous pouvez escrire un mot à M. Raudot [A.D. Raudot, successively intendant of Canada, intendant of naval classes and a director of the Company of the Indies.] car M. de Vaudreuil amuse la coure [sic] et mandera que c'est notre faute si nous n'avons la paix. Il parroit n'ovoir [sic] d'autres veues que de faire couller la vante de castor et empescher en laissant le Renard frapper sur nous le pays de s'établir et fermer le commerce entre son gouvernement et le vostre" Boulanger, Kerebin et Thomur à du Tisé, 10 janvier 1725, AC, C 11 A, vol. 56, p. 267v.

88. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 8 mai 1725, AC, B, vol. 48, p. 741.

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squelch this sort of talk.

It is quite likely that these allegations contain an element of truth. Although Louisiana was not in a position to develop into a serious rival for control of the western fur trade, Vaudreuil had nonetheless entertained definite fears on this score ever since the annexation of the Illinois country to the southern colony. He was also shrewd enough to understand that as long as the Fox continued to war against the Illinois the fur trading activities of Upper Louisiana would be largely interrupted. But it is nonetheless improbable that he allowed the war to continue solely for this purpose. His attitude toward the Fox was primarily dictated by the necessity of keeping New France's trading empire at peace and enlarging it so as to include the Sioux tribes. The peace treaty of 1724 basically expresses a determination not to allow the problems of Louisiana ^{to} interfere with or delay the implementation of this policy. After Vaudreuil's death, with the Company of the Indies bringing strong pressure to bear on Canada in the hope of obtaining a declaration of war on the Fox, the colony continued to manifest its opposition to such a course of action. "On convient que ce seroit le meilleur expédient," states the anonymous author of a memoir on the subject, "mais aussi l'on soutient que rien ne peut être plus dangereux et plus préjudiciable aux deux colonies que cette entreprise si elle ne réussit pas... Si les Renards se sauvent chez les Sioux... ils viendront nous désoler dans tous les pays d'en haut et les François de l'une et de l'autre colonie ne pourront aller d'un poste à l'autre sans se

89. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 5 juin 1725, Ibid., p. 862.

risquer à être tués ou pillés."⁹⁰ When Vaudreuil's successor, Beauharnois, finally decided to wage an all-out war on those Indians it was not out of sympathy for Louisiana. Rather, it was because penetration into the Far West, which they continued to obstruct,⁹¹ could no longer be delayed.

By 1725, Canada had largely fulfilled its part of the program decided upon by French colonial interests shortly after the treaty of Utrecht. The colony had developed a first chain of posts along lake Ontario to protect the Upper country from New York designs and a second chain extending far into the West. Each of these settlements was designed to act as a pole of attraction among the different Indian tribes inhabiting the interior. By strengthening their economic and political ties with the Indians in this manner the French of Canada were in the process of acquiring a strength far beyond their numbers and appeared capable of holding the interior against the English. Louisiana for its part had failed to keep peace with Canada in the race to occupy the West. It was only in 1725 that the Company of the Indies announced its intention of settling the Wabash and thus present the English with an unbroken line of posts and fortifications running along the back of their settlements from Cape Breton Island to the Gulf of Mexico. Even before this final development occurred what had been accomplished in the West by 1725 was an impressive achievement and it

90. Mémoire concernant la paix que M. de Lignery a fait avec les chefs des Renards, Sakis et Puants à la baie le 7 juin 1726, AC, C 11 A, vol. 48, p. 420.

91. Despite the peace treaty concluded by Lignery in 1724, the Fox continued their acts of hostility against the French. Longueuil et Bégon à Maurepas, 31 octobre 1725, AC, C 11 A, vol. 47, p. 134.

terrified the British who now lived in constant fear of being driven into the sea.

If the nature of French western policy is to be understood, however, it must be studied from the point of view of French objectives and not from that of British fears. Where Vaudreuil is concerned his western policy consisted of three basic elements, distinct in appearance but interdependent in reality. One of these, which transpires through the quarrel with Louisiana, was the management of the West for the benefit of the Canadian rather than of the French fur trade. Another objective to which Vaudreuil returned time and time again in his dispatches, was the preservation of peace among the various tribes. Finally came the great problem of excluding the English from the West. Vaudreuil's policy here is based on the same premise as his strategy along both lake Ontario and, as will be shown in the next chapter, the New England border. The governor **knew** very well that the French would not be able to oppose English penetration if the Indians ever consented to it; but he also realized that the English would be unable to make much headway in the West as long as the Indians refused them this consent. His solution, therefore, was to re-group the key tribes in the vicinity of Lake Michigan, a zone sufficiently removed from the English settlements to permit the free exercise of French influence, and to build posts among the Indians which refused to migrate to the area. The plan was sound and for a time it succeeded, but in the long run it could not overcome the formidable handicap of interior trade goods. Shortly after Vaudreuil's death the first section of his defensive system collapsed. Noyan, commander of fort Frontenac, then reported, that the Miamis were

trading with the English on such a large scale that the post built among them had lost its raison d'être and should be abandoned.⁹²

After inflicting heavy damages to French positions on Lake Ontario the forces of English expansionism, spearheaded by cheap trade goods and high prices for beaver pelts, had resumed their westward progress and were now breaking down the secondary defenses of the French empire.

92. *Projet pour s'opposer à l'aggrandissement des Anglois en Canada et pour le bien de la colonie françoise*, 15 octobre 1729, AC, C 11 A, vol. 51, pp. 465v - 466.

CHAPTER XIII

The Anglo-Abenaki War

By means of a network of posts developed between 1717 and 1720, Canada, by the latter date, was in a position to assert its authority over the West and counterbalance growing English pressure. The situation was not bright, especially along Lake Ontario, but on the whole it was temporarily under control. Along the Eastern frontier on the other hand, where undefined boundaries had seriously weakened Canada's position, the outlook was bleak. New England was determined to capitalize on the situation created by the treaty of Utrecht by extending its sway over the land of the Abenakis. The French, for reasons already explained, had to prevent such a development but it was no longer possible to contain the New Englanders by waging war on them as had been done from 1703 to 1713. As soon as peace was concluded Pontchartrain told Vaudreuil that he should now maintain friendly relations with his Eastern neighbours.¹ Everything, then, depended on the position the Abenakis would take as the New Englanders attempted to settle the lands they inhabited. How Vaudreuil was able to use their grievances to provoke another war between them and the English will now be examined.

The treaty of Utrecht had found the Abenaki nation war weary and eagerly looking forward to living at peace with New England.²

1. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 4 juillet 1713, AC, B, vol. 35, p. 322.

2. Submission of the Eastern Indians made at Portsmouth, August 24, 1713, CSPA 1712 - 1714, pp. 229 - 231.

They had suffered greatly over the past ten years. Dudley stated that during that period they had lost "some hundreds of their number."³ Bégon for his part calculated that the Abenaki population, exclusive of the part inhabiting the missions of St. François and Bécancour, was down to 1,300 souls, including 320 warriors.⁴ They were divided into three groups of approximately equal size which clustered about the Jesuit missions of Medoktek, on the St. John River, Panaouamské, on the Pebnoscot, and Narantsouak (Norridgewok) on the Kennebec. The last of these missions was directed by the celebrated Jesuit Sebastien Rasle and was easily the most important. Not only was it the closest to the English but it also commanded the strategic Kennebec-Chaudière River system which led into the heart of New France. On the Acadian peninsula dwelt a number of lesser tribes, notably the MicMacs, Malecites, and Canibas. These Indians were ministered to by the Récollets and depended politically on the fortified fishing town of Louisbourg, which had come into existence in 1713 as a result of the loss of Newfoundland and Acadia.⁵ On both the mainland and the peninsula, therefore, the same basic pattern emerges. The English were close to the Indians and in a good position to draw them into their economic orbit. The French for their part depended largely on the influence and prestige of the missionaries to keep the natives in their interest. The character of the forthcoming struggle for control of the Abenakis is inherent in this situation.

3. Dudley to the Council of Trade and Plantation, December 2, 1712, Ibid., p. 102.

4. Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 25 septembre 1715, AM, B 1, vol. 8, pp. 239 - 241.

5. J.S. McLellan, Louisbourg from its Foundation to its Fall, 1713 - 1758, (London 1918), pp. 1 - 22.

Although the Abenakis strongly desired peace, the nature of New England's post-war policy had placed them in a dilemma. In the course of the seventeenth century several inhabitants of Massachusetts Bay had obtained title deeds from the Indians for land situated between the Kennebec and the Ste.Croix Rivers. How these deeds were obtained is a matter of conjecture. Thomas Coram, himself an influential figure in Massachusetts at the time, stated that the Indians had first been debauched with strong drink.⁶ Nonetheless, on the strength of these transactions, several New Englanders had settled on Abenaki lands, only to be driven back to Casco Bay and points even farther West during the war which began in the 1670's. As soon as peace returned in 1713, the drive to colonize the Maine wilderness was resumed with more energy than ever. Members of the Massachusetts General Court were interested in these lands and in the companies that were formed to develop them.⁷ Thomas Coram and a group of partners hoped to erect a new province on the territory between Nova Scotia and Maine, to be settled by disbanded soldiers.⁸ The Pebnoscot River Company, the Plymouth company and the Muscongus Company offered one hundred acre lots to individual families. By 1716, as a result of these activities, Massachusetts had extended its jurisdiction as far as the Ste.Croix River. Hundreds of people, mostly Irish immigrants, had settled these lands and moved civilization deep into Abenaki

6. Coram to the Council of Trade and Plantations, June 6, 1717, CSPA 1716 - 1717, pp. 323 - 324.

7. R.H. Lord, J.E. Sexton, E.T. Harrington, History of the Archdiocese of Boston in the Various Stages of its Development (3 vol. Boston 1945), p. 100.

8. CSPA 1716 - 1717, p. XLVII.

territory. Sawmills were erected, cattle-breeding was begun, sturgeon fisheries and the lumber trade flourished. Furthermore, to protect these new establishments, the companies began building forts.⁹ At least five were erected on the Kennebec, and another slightly eastward of the St. George River. These forts did perhaps more to antagonize the Abenakis than any other aspect of English policy.

These new settlements, by scaring game from the woods and ruining the rivers for fishing, were a distinct threat to the Abenakis' traditional way of life. Nonetheless, the English hoped to keep the Indians at peace by means of an advantageous trade. They offered to pay high prices for their beaver and to establish trading houses for their convenience.¹⁰ This policy made a strong impression on the Eastern Indians. They even invited their kinsmen who were settled at St. François and Bécancour to take their trade to the English, who would give them more for one beaver pelt than the French gave them for three.¹¹ At the same time, in an effort to break the hold of the Jesuits upon the Abenakis, the New Englanders introduced a Protestant minister among them.¹² This last tactic completely failed to achieve the desired result and was soon abandoned. Still, the Abenakis who yearned for peace and wished to profit from trade, seemed prepared to allow the English to penetrate their lands.

9. Lord, Sexton and Harrington, op. cit., pp. 99 - 100.

10. Ibid., p. 104.

11. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 14 octobre 1716, AC, C 11 A, vol. 37, pp. 37 - 37v.

12. Lord, Sexton and Harrington, op. cit., pp. 105 - 106.

This turn of events showed the Eastern Indians to be wavering in their traditional allegiance to the French and was viewed by Vaudreuil with considerable alarm. When Francis Nicholson, the governor of Port Royal, invited them to a conference, neither the entreaties of the Jesuits nor of the usually influential St. Castin could keep them going.¹³ The governor thought that only one method was available to keep the Indians in the French interest: increase the material advantages of the Canadian alliance.¹⁴ Michel Bégon, by broadening considerably the approach to the problem, presented the French authorities with a comprehensive program designed to strengthen the colony's position along the New England border and in Acadia itself.

Like Vaudreuil, Bégon thought that the French alliance had to be made economically profitable to keep the Abenakis from going over to the English. One way of achieving this was to remove all restrictions on the number of congés issued to voyageurs willing to travel to Abenaki country. The gift fund, abolished since the fall of Port Royal, should also be revived. If this were done Bégon felt sure that the missionaries could induce the Abenakis to take their trade to distant Quebec rather than to the English settlements. Indeed, the missionaries occupied the key position in Bégon's program. Like Sebastien Rasle who once wrote that the Abenakis prized their faith more than worldly goods,¹⁵ the intendant regarded Catholicism as the strongest link in the Franco -

13. Vaudreuil au ministre, 16 septembre 1714, AC, C 11 A, vol. 34, p. 289.

14. Ibid., p. 289v.

15. Sebastien Rasle à son neveu, 15 octobre 1722, JRAD., vol. 67, p. 94.

Abenaki alliance. In order to enhance the influence and prestige of the Jesuits he urged that the court assume part of the cost of new chapels at Medoktek and Norridgewok. Finally, to undermine English positions in the peninsula, no effort should be spared to induce the French population to remove to Ile Royale. The Acadians at this time kept the English garrison supplied, served them as trading agents and interpreters, and were also a guarantee of safety against what the English feared the most: the Abenakis. Should they withdraw from Acadia the intendant was convinced that the English would find further occupation impossible and be forced to abandon Port Royal.¹⁶

This program was sound and appears to have favorably impressed the Council of the Marine. Yet, this body was only prepared to implement its least expensive parts. One thousand two hundred livres were granted for the construction of the two chapels at Medoktek and Norridgewok.¹⁷ To avoid an overall increase in the Indian gift fund, that of Louisbourg, which amounted to four thousand livres, was divided and half of it transferred to the Canadian budget, to be used exclusively for the benefit of the Abenakis.¹⁸ Where the Acadians were concerned, little if anything was done to facilitate their removal to Ile Royale. But even if help had been forthcoming it is not certain that the Acadians would have availed themselves of it. These people were primarily farmers while Ile

16. Bégon au ministre, 25 septembre 1715, AC, C 11 A, vol. 35, pp. 115v - 128.

17. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, AC, B, vol. 38, p. 225.

18. Loc. cit.

Royale was suited for little outside of fishing.¹⁹ Furthermore, the English themselves were doing what they could to discourage the Acadians from leaving.²⁰ Prophetically, Bégon stated that they would do so "tant qu'ils le croiront utile à l'établissement de la colonie."²¹

While Bégon was explaining what peaceful methods the French might use to strengthen their Eastern positions, Vaudreuil was in France and promoting a more aggressive course of action. Ramezay's dispatch of 1715 showed the Abenakis to be growing restless as English policy became clearer. At their meeting with Nicholson they had been asked to swear an oath of fidelity to George I and to allow the English to settle among them. The Abenakis rejected the oath, stating that they acknowledged no foreign ruler. Although they assured Nicholson of their desire to remain at peace they emphasized that they would not suffer anyone to settle on their lands or to build forts there.²² Pontchartrain had already learned of the Indians' attitude by way of Ile Royale. In July, 1715, he told Costebelle and Soubras, governor and commissaire ordonnateur of that colony, that "il faut toujours les maintenir dans ces sentiments sans cependant que cela paroisse ouvertement."²³ In 1716 Vaudreuil took matters one step further. He suggested to the Council of the Marine that if the English persisted in their policy

19. Bégon au ministre, 25 septembre 1715, AC, C 11 A, vol. 35, pp. 106 - 107.

20. Vaudreuil au ministre, 16 septembre 1714, AC, C 11 A, vol. 34, pp. 287v - 288v.

21. Bégon au ministre, 25 septembre 1715, AC, C 11 A, vol. 35, p. 123v.

22. Ramezay au ministre, 16 septembre 1715, AC, C 11 A, vol. 35, pp. 77 - 78v.

23. Le ministre à Costebelle et Soubras, 4 juillet 1715, AC, B, vol. 37, p. 228v.

of expansion the French should secretly urge the Indians to drive them out.²⁴ How the cautious Pontchartrain would have reacted to this suggestion is problematical. But the fact that Vaudreuil began fomenting Anglo-Abenaki discord soon after his return to Canada, indicates that the Council must have authorized him to carry out his plan.

At approximately the same time ~~that~~ Vaudreuil returned to Canada in October, 1716, a new governor, Samuel Shute, arrived in Massachusetts. Early the following year the latter began a series of meetings with the Abenakis to confirm the existing peace and win their consent to the policy of colonization already under way.²⁵ The principal meeting occurred at Arrowsick, on the Kennebec river, in August, 1717. Although Shute reported complete success²⁶ the Indians had in fact shown themselves badly divided. The Pebnoscots were peacefully inclined, something which caused Vaudreuil to criticize their missionary, Father Lauverjat.²⁷ Most of the Norridgewoks, however, were hostile to the English. Their spokesman Wiwurma, speaking of his land "avec une fierté sans égale", rejected Shute's allegation that they were British subjects living on territory ceded to England by the treaty of Utrecht.²⁸ His defiant attitude may well have been due to Vaudreuil who had received advance notice of the meeting and urged the Abenakis to

24. Mémoire à Son Altesse Royale, le duc d'Orléans, février 1716, AC, C 11 A, vol. 36, pp. 108v - 109.

25. Shute to the Council of Trade and Plantations, February 27, 1717, CSPA 1716 - 1717, p. 262.

26. Shute to the Council of Trade and Plantations, November 9, 1717, Ibid., pp. 100 - 101.

27. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 31 octobre 1718, AC, C 11 A, vol. 39, pp. 157v - 159v.

28. Ibid., p. 157v.

resist English overtures.²⁹ "Je ne cesserai pas d'entretenir comme j'ai fait jusqu'à présent tous ces sauvages dans le sentiment que la terre où ils sont est à eux" the governor asserted, "qu'ils la doivent conserver et ne pas souffrir que l'Anglois s'en empare." In case of an English attack, he apparently promised them arms and ammunition.³⁰ With Vaudreuil urging them on in this manner the Norridgewoks grew bolder. By 1718 they had resorted to destruction of English property. When a British settler complained of the damages he had suffered and asked the Indians for compensation, he was told to seek it from the person who had authorized him to settle on their lands.³¹

These various developments alarmed both the French and the English. Shute blamed the attitude of the Abenakis on the Jesuits and began to fear for the continuation of peace. Bégon, for his part, appealed to the Council of the Marine for an immediate settlement of the boundary issue. He pointed out that two hundred settlers had recently arrived on the Kennebec and that the governor of Massachusetts was acting as the owner of all the lands between Boston and Quebec. Were it not for Father Rasle's influence over the Indians the English might already have succeeded in their expansionist designs. "Une plus longue remise sur la décision des limites," concluded the Intendant, "donne aux Anglois un avantage

29. "J'avois trouvé moyen de rompre ces pratiques [Shute's] et de faire ouvrir les yeux aux sauvages sur le danger qu'il y avoit pour eux d'avoir de tels voisins" Ibid., p. 157.

30. Ibid., pp. 161 - 161v.

31. Ibid., pp. 159v - 160v.

qu'ils n'avoient pas en temps de guerre, leur donnant le temps de faire des établissements dont ils ne sera pas facile de les chasser."³² This dispatch reached the Council at the same time as news of mounting tensions between French and English fishermen over the question of ownership of the island of Canso. Although the English contended that the treaty of Utrecht had left them sole possessors of the island, French fishermen, notably the Basques of Sibourne and St.Jean de Luz, continued to use it as a base for their own operations much as they had always done. In 1718 a group of Englishmen, who resented this competition, took matters into their own hands. Led by a captain Smart they raided Canso and confiscated all the French equipment they could find. One fisherman, a Basque named Iryberry, was particularly hard hit by this raid suffering losses estimated at £ 20,000.³³ On both the mainland and off-shore islands the situation was rapidly deteriorating.

As soon as it heard of these incidents the Council sent a memoir to Abbé Dubois, French Ambassador to London. It explained in what manner British pretensions were a threat to Canadian security and urged him to obtain orders from Whitehall forbidding all intrusions by New England on territories contested between the two Crowns. In the interest of future harmony, immediate steps should also be taken to summon the Commission on boundaries called for by the treaty of Utrecht.³⁴ Vaudreuil and Bégon were told of

32. Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 8 novembre 1718, AC, C 11 A, vol. 39, pp. 174 - 176.

33. Mémoire sur l'affaire de Canseau, 24 janvier 1722, AC, B, vol. 45, pp. 239v - 244.

34. Conseil de la Marine à l'abbé Dubois, 22 mars 1719, AC, B, vol. 41, p. 56; Mémoire sur les limites de l'Amérique Septentrionale, s.d., Ibid., pp. 56v - 57v.

the instructions sent to Dubois. Until the outcome of his mission was known the choice of a defensive strategy along the New England border was left to the governor's discretion, the Council only stipulating that it should not be provocative in nature.³⁵

Unfortunately, the efforts to solve the boundary problem by means of a commission met with complete failure. As a result of Dubois' efforts, England did agree to send its commissioners to Paris to discuss the situation in North America³⁶ but the grounds for an understanding with the French were lacking. Although what transpired at the sittings of the committee is not clear, proceedings apparently never advanced beyond the question of the limits of Hudson Bay and the ownership of Canso.³⁷ The British and French representatives mutually rejected each other's claims on these two subjects and the commission broke up, not to reconvene again for another thirty years. As a result, it now devolved upon Vaudreuil to defend, to the best of his abilities, French interests in Acadia. This he did, skilfully and ruthlessly.

By 1719, with New England continuing to infringeⁿ on Indian land and Vaudreuil still encouraging the natives to resist these encroachments,³⁸ a rift had begun to appear in Anglo-Abenaki relations.

35. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 23 mai 1719, Ibid., pp. 522v - 523.

36. Chammorel au Conseil de la Marine, 27 juillet 1719, AE, Corr. politique, Angleterre, vol. 325, pp. 87 - 88; Chammorel au Conseil de la Marine, 21 septembre 1719, Ibid., vol. 326, pp. 41 - 42.

37. Judging from the nature of the memoirs written at this time, the attention of the commissioners appears to have centered largely on the limits of Hudson Bay. See for instance Mémoire au sujet des limites de la Baie d'Hudson remis par milord Stairs à M. le maréchal d'Estrées, s.d., AC, C 11 E, vol. 2, pp. 125 - 127. To counter English pretensions the French solicited the advice of a number of persons, including Ruelle d'Auteuil and Lamothe-Cadillac.

38. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 26 octobre 1719, AC, C 11 A, vol. 40, p. 46v.

Affidavits were received by the Massachusetts General Court complaining of "threatening speeches and unfriendly actions" by the Indians.³⁹ A delegation of chiefs which visited Quebec told Vaudreuil of having warned Shute to restrict the new settlements to the Lower Kennebec. When one settler transgressed the boundaries set down in this manner, the Abenakis destroyed his house.⁴⁰ But despite these developments the French, as yet, could only count on the fidelity of a minority of these Indians. The Medokteks and Pebnobscoths were not participating in the hostile demonstrations that were now becoming more frequent and a not uninfluential peace party even existed among the Norridgewoks. This group, in fact, was working hard to restore full harmony with New England. In 1720 it prevailed upon the whole mission to send four hostages to Boston as a guarantee of payment for damages done to English property. This gesture was interpreted by the New England authorities as an indication that the Norridgewoks were now prepared to allow the establishment of settlers on their land and they therefore asked the mission to send deputies to a conference where the subject could be discussed.⁴¹ The outcome of these projected negotiations was of the utmost importance for Canada. Should the English manoeuvre succeed, the French colony would find itself in much the same position along the New England border as New York in the region of lake Ontario where it could not oppose French policy for want of Iroquois support.

39. Dummer to the Council of Trade and Plantations, February 25, 1720, CSPA 1719 - 1720, pp. 365 - 366.

40. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 26 octobre 1719, AC, C 11 A, vol. 40, pp. 45v - 46.

41. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 8 octobre 1721, AC, C 11 A, vol. 43, pp. 372 - 372v.

Father Rasle was quick to realize that the peace party might prevail and bring Abenaki resistance to an end. To counter English strategy, he immediately dispatched the six most faithful Norridgewoks to Quebec for the purpose of inviting the Hurons of Lorette and the Abenakis of St.François and Bécancour to be present at the conference. Vaudreuil spared no effort to assure the success of their mission. He was with the deputies when they explained to their domiciled brethren how prejudicial the English settlements were to the interests of their nation. In response to this appeal St.François and Bécancour each agreed to send three canoes and Lorette, one. Accompanying these Indians was Father la Chasse, now superior of the Canadian Jesuits but missionary at Panaouamské for several years before. At both his old mission and Norridgewok, La Chasse campaigned vigorously in favor of the French party and also appealed for representatives from Medoktek and nearby Pesmoukouady. One hundred Abenakis responded to these overtures. The delegation had now grown to 200 or 250 men. Thanks to the relentless efforts of the Jesuits, the French party had secured a solid majority.⁴²

The behaviour of this group was apparently intended to bring matters to a head. Led by Rasle and la Chasse they appeared at Arrowsick in full war attire. After waiting in vain for Shute to arrive they summoned the officers of the five nearby forts and the principal settlers of the area to appear before them. When this was done, they threw down two hundred beaver pelts as compensation for damages, asked for the return of their hostages and issued an

42. Ibid., pp. 372v - 373v.

ultimatum ordering the English to withdraw from their land.⁴³

Had the English postponed a definite reply or simply attempted to compromise they might yet have split the delegation, which was already beginning to waver, and broken this desperate effort of French diplomacy. Instead, they chose to reply in kind. They informed the Indians that they could not withdraw from the lands they occupied without orders from the governor. As for the hostages they could not be set free until four others were sent to Boston as a guarantee of continuing good faith.⁴⁴ This reply infuriated the Abenakis. In their name la Chasse read a statement repudiating all past land transactions and ordering the New Englanders to withdraw within three weeks. If this was not done, it was warned, "je croirai que tu veux te rendre maitre de ma terre malgré moy."⁴⁵

Although the English and the Abenakis now appeared on the verge of war, Vaudreuil knew that the Indians would think long and hard before taking this final step. Not only did they need the English trade but they would also undoubtedly feel too weak to engage in war single-handed.⁴⁶ In the fall of 1721, however, as a result of the events at Arrowsick, they appeared willing to declare war on the English provided the French supported them in this endeavour. In October of that year they appealed to Louis XV for help. This request, obviously penned by one of the missionaries, called the

43. Ibid., pp. 373v - 374.

44. Ibid., pp. 374 - 374v.

45. Parolle de toute la nation abénakise et de toutes les autres nations sauvages, ses alliés, au gouverneur de Baston au sujet de la terre des Abénakis dont les Anglois s'emparent depuis la paix, octobre 1721, AC, F 3, vol. 2, p. 414v.

46. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 8 octobre 1721, AC, C 11 A, vol. 43, pp. 375 - 375v.

monarch's attention to the unflagging devotion they had always shown the French in all their wars with the English. Since 1713, New England had been usurping their lands under cover of the treaty of Utrecht. Now was the time for the French to show their gratitude for past services by ordering the English to withdraw or, should they refuse, by joining their allies in the defense of their land.⁴⁷

Vaudreuil, who feared that the Abenakis would finally yield to English pressure and become their allies, if the aid they solicited was not granted, urged the court to allow him to appear openly on their side. This demand shows that the governor was prepared to follow the same policy of calculated risk along the New England border as on the Lake Ontario frontier. Vaudreuil undoubtedly knew that he was acting on doubtful ground in planting a settlement at Niagara. Yet, by first securing Iroquois consent, he had reduced New York to helplessness. Similarly, he assumed that New England would recoil at the prospect of a war pitting them against the joint forces of the French and the Abenakis and evacuate the territories east of Casco Bay.⁴⁸ One year previously, in his important memoir on the Acadian situation, Father Charlevoix had also urged that the French let the English know that they were prepared to intervene actively on behalf of the Abenakis. The Jesuit may also have felt that Vaudreuil was proceeding incautiously.

47. Parolles des Abénakis au Roy sur ce que les Anglois, depuis le traité d'Utrecht, s'emparent de leurs terres, octobre 1721, AC, F 3, vol. 2, pp. 410 - 411v.

48. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 8 octobre 1721, AC, C 11 A, vol. 43, pp. 376v - 377.

Should the Abenakis be driven to a breach and the French, for one reason or another, find themselves incapable of coming to their rescue, New England would easily overwhelm the Indians and tighten their grip on the contested area.⁴⁹

Final word in the matter rested with the Council of the Marine. Vaudreuil and Bégon's dispatch of October 8 was discussed by this body on December 19 and on December 28, a message was hurried to Dubois in London. Once again it was emphasized that until the limits between the colonies were settled the New Englanders should refrain from settling the territories east of Casco Bay. Should they continue to encroach on these lands, the King of France would be unable to refuse his protection to the Abenakis. Dubois was urged to forward England's reply to this note by March to allow sufficient time for drafting the Canadian dispatches.⁵⁰ By June 1, 1722, with the King's vessel fitting out at Rochefort for the trip to Canada, Dubois had yet to be heard from.⁵¹ With nothing to go on from England, the Council instructed Vaudreuil to grant the Abenakis secret assistance.⁵² This, as it turned out, was the home authorities' final position on the matter, and it prevented Vaudreuil from openly assisting the Abenakis as he had wished to do. "Le Roy de France," it was later written, "préfère conserver l'union avec la couronne angloise que de permettre aux

49. Mémoire sur les limites de l'Acadie, 19 octobre 1720, AC, C 11 E, vol. 2, p. 63v,, p. 67v.

50. Le Conseil de la Marine à l'abbé Dubois, 28 décembre 1721, AC, B, vol. 44, pp. 120v - 121.

51. Le Conseil de la Marine à l'abbé Dubois, 1 juin 1722, AC, B, vol. 45, pp. 320v - 321.

52. Le Conseil de la Marine à Vaudreuil, 5 juin 1722, AC, B, vol. 45, pp. 804 - 805; le ministre à Vaudreuil, 14 octobre 1723, AC, C 11 A, vol. 45, p. 11.

François de se joindre à l'Abénaki."⁵³

Meanwhile New England had been angered by the behaviour of the Abenakis at Arrowsick. Shute termed it "hostile", blamed the episode on Rasle, and sent an armed detachment to the new settlements to protect them during harvest time.⁵⁴ He also asked Vaudreuil to remove the missionaries from among the Indians and to instruct the latter to behave peacefully. If a war broke out he told the French governor that he would expect his cooperation to help restore order.⁵⁵ Vaudreuil's reply was not conciliating. The missionaries, he informed Shute, were not settled on English soil and the behaviour of the Indians, which he had found so offensive, was simply designed to let the settlers know that they had to withdraw from their lands. The Abenakis had been complaining to him for three years of infringements on their territories but he had managed to contain them during all this time. This, he warned, might soon prove impossible. He also cautioned Shute against molesting the Indians, for the King of France would then expect him to come to their defense.⁵⁶ Although Vaudreuil did not yet know what policy the court would prescribe he was brandishing the threat of a new Indian war in the hope of frightening the English into a retreat.

Even before this reply reached Shute, the Massachusetts Assembly, several of whose members were interested in the land

53. Mémoire du Roy pour le comte de Broglie, ambassadeur en Angleterre, au sujet des colonies françoises de l'Amérique, s.d., AC, B, vol. 46, pp.78 - 79.

54. Shute to the Council of Trade and Plantations, September 8, 1721, CSPA 1720 - 1721, p. 407.

55. Shute to Vaudreuil, July 21, 1721, Coll. Mss. N. F., vol. 3, pp. 55 - 56.

56. Vaudreuil à Shute, 22 décembre 1721, Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 63 - 64.

companies, had decided to break Abenaki resistance by removing the agents provocateurs from their midst. In December, 1721, New England raiders surprised St.Castin at his Pebnoscot residence and took him back to Boston, a prisoner. In January, 1722, a party of one hundred men burst upon the Norridgewok mission in the hope of capturing Father Rasle. Warned of their coming, the missionary managed to flee a short time before their arrival, so that the New Englanders had to be satisfied with looting his house and chapel.⁵⁷ This operation reaped unexpected dividends. A correspondence with the Canadian civil authorities, discovered among his papers, disclosed that most of the missionary's activities could be traced back to Vaudreuil.⁵⁸

These acts of violence did not intimidate the Abenakis. As might have been expected they had exactly the contrary effect. These Indians, especially the Norridgewoks, were already unhappy over the fact that the English had scorned their ultimatum of the previous year. The violation of their mission now exasperated them and they began to destroy property on an extensive scale. Fishing sloops, lying at anchor on the Lower Kennebec, were looted; the settlements in that area were wrecked. While the Abenakis carefully refrained from harming any one they did capture some sixty settlers, all of whom except five were soon released. These they

57. Extrait de la réponse en date du 17 octobre 1722 faite par Vaudreuil et Bégon au Mémoire du Roy du 8 juin de la dite année, AC, C 11 A, vol. 44, pp. 303 - 304; Vaudreuil à Shute, 7 juin 1722, Coll. Mss. N. F., vol. 3, pp. 79 - 80.

58. Bégon à Rasle, 14 juin 1721, CSPA 1722 - 1723, pp. 28 - 30; Vaudreuil à Rasle, 25 septembre 1721, Ibid., pp. 27 - 28.

kept to match their four hostages still detained in Boston.⁵⁹

As a result of these latest incidents Shute expressed fear that war would break out unless some measures were taken to oblige Vaudreuil "to act strictly up to the stipulations agreed to between the Crowns of Great Britain and France."⁶⁰ He told the governor of Canada that he was now fully aware of the extent of his involvement in Abenaki depredations. Once more he called his attention to the numerous treaties concluded between the Abenakis and New England and emphasized that Norridgewok was located on British territory.⁶¹ In reply, Vaudreuil termed the looting of Father Rasle's quarters an act of hostility and repeated that he would assist the Abenakis if a war should break out.⁶² With both governors holding their ground and refusing to yield to the other the situation could only deteriorate further.

The Anglo - Abenaki breach was finally precipitated in the late spring of 1722. At that time a group of new Englanders who were patrolling the seashore discovered some sixteen Indians who had carelessly gone to sleep after a foray into the English settlements. According to the French version, the only existing account of the affair, the English opened fire on the sleeping Indians, killing five and wounding two others mortally. One of the latter managed

59. Extrait de la réponse en date du 17 octobre 1722 faite par Vaudreuil et Bégon au Mémoire du Roy du 8 juin de la dite année, AC, C 11 A, vol. 44, pp. 304 - 304v; Shute to the Council of Trade and Plantations, July 27, 1722, CSPA 1722 - 1723, p. 117; Shute to Popple, June 18, 1722, Ibid., pp. 89 - 90; Cummings to Popple, June 20, 1722, Ibid., pp. 90 - 91.

60. Shute to the Council of Trade and Plantations, March 13, 1722, Ibid., p. 27.

61. Shute to Vaudreuil, March 14, 1722, Ibid., pp. 416 - 418.

62. Vaudreuil à Shute, 7 juin 1722, Coll. Mss. N. F., vol. 3, pp. 78 - 83.

to give chase and capture one of the assailants whom he quickly dispatched with a blow of his war club.⁶³ The shedding of blood made open hostilities inevitable. On July 22, Shute declared war on the Abenakis. The Norridgewoks retorted by issuing a general call for help to the domiciled Indians.

This sudden turn of events may well have surprised Vaudreuil. Since 1716, his strategy along the New England border was founded on the assumption that the English would evacuate all the lands east of Casco rather than engageⁱⁿ a war with the Abenakis reinforced by the French. The declaration of war proved him wrong and the orders received from the Council of the Marine prevented him from joining the Indians as he had threatened to do. In the eyes of the French, Massachusetts must now have appeared in a good position to win a quick victory and overrun all the Abenaki lands. This province, however, lacked both the will and the resources to provide the considerable effort necessary to achieve this end. The war quickly proved unpopular with the average inhabitant. Reinforcements could not be had; the Iroquois, despite the entreaties of both Burnet and the Massachusetts representatives, refused to enter the fray.⁶⁴ The expenses, generally, were proving "great and insupportable."⁶⁵ As a result, Massachusetts was far more interested in restoring peace than in prolonging hostilities.

63. Extrait de la réponse en date du 17 octobre 1722 faite par Vaudreuil et Bégon au Mémoire du Roy du 8 juin de la dite année, AC, C 11 A, vol. 44, pp. 304v - 305; de Mézy au Conseil de la Marine, 1 septembre 1722, AC, C 11 C, vol. 15, p. 234v.

64. Burnet to the Lords of Trade, November 21, 1722, NYCD, vol. 5, pp. 655 - 657; Burnet to the Lords of Trade, August 9, 1724, Ibid., pp. 709 - 710; Burnet to the Lords of Trade, November 7, 1724, Ibid., pp. 711 - 713.

65. Dummer to the Council of Trade and Plantations, March 31, 1725, CSPA 1724 - 1725, p. 351.

Meantime Vaudreuil was helping the Abenakis by every method short of direct participation. Almost all the Norridgewoks had abandoned their mission in the winter of 1722 and withdrawn to Canada for greater safety. The court agreed to create a special fund of 2,000 livres, later increased to 4,000 livres, to sustain them for the duration of the war. To conceal the real purpose of this subsidy it was placed on the budget of the Jesuits rather than on that of the colony.⁶⁶ The governor also continued to provide the Indians with arms and ammunition. When the English protested against this, he pointed out that the Abenakis had been receiving gifts from the French for the past sixty years.⁶⁷ Vaudreuil's most important contribution, however, was to encourage secretly the mission Indians to join forces with the Abenakis.⁶⁸ Indeed, it was only the intervention of the Canadian Indians that prolonged the war until 1726. Without their constant prodding the Medokteks and the Pebnoscots, who had always been peacefully inclined, might well have refused even the sporadic support which they did volunteer. Nor would recruits have been readily available elsewhere. For a time the Mic Macs of Acadia joined in but their participation was discouraged by abbé Gaulin, superior of the Récollet missions. These Récollets were located on the peninsula, under English jurisdiction, and it was therefore important for them to remain on good terms with the Port Royal authorities.⁶⁹ The

66. Le ministre à la Chasse, 6 juin 1724, AC, B, vol. 47, pp. 1206 - 1207; Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Chazel, 15 mai 1725, AC, B, vol. 48, pp. 800 - 800v.

67. Vaudreuil au ministre, 22 mai 1725, AC, C 11 A, vol. 47, pp. 155v - 156.

68. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 14 octobre 1723, AC, C 11 A, vol. 45, pp. 20v - 21.

69. Longueuil et Bégon au ministre, 31 octobre 1725, AC, C 11 A, vol. 47, pp. 69 - 69v.

Norridgewoks also attempted to enlist the support of the Ottawas. Vaudreuil hoped that these Western Indians would agree to join in the war since their participation would not only bolster the fighting force of the Abenakis but also interrupt their commerce with the English of New York. Like the Iroquois, however, the Ottawas refused to become involved in the conflict.⁷⁰ As a result, for the duration of hostilities, most of the warriors were recruited from among the mission Indians and for long periods they even appeared to have warred alone. Vaudreuil was able to justify their intervention without revealing his own hand by claiming, with some element of truth, that they had decided to assist the Abenakis out of anger with the English for attempting to appropriate their lands.⁷¹

Despite its lack of popularity with both the English and the Abenakis the war itself was bitterly fought. Small Indian parties were continually on the prowl, harrying the New Englanders. They vented much of their rage on the forts, several of which had been abandoned when war broke out. The Pebnoscots even laid siege, though unsuccessfully, to Fort George, the easternmost English settlement and the one lying closest to their mission.⁷² In other actions fishing sloops were attacked and the crews killed; sawmills were destroyed; numerous prisoners were taken.⁷³ Although Vaudreuil hoped that the English would weary and agree to withdraw

70. Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 14 octobre 1723, AC, C 11 A, vol. 45, p. 21v.

71. Copie d'une lettre écrite au gouverneur de Baston le 30 octobre 1724, par Vaudreuil, AC, C 11 A, vol. 46, pp. 140 - 140v.

72. Extrait de la réponse en date du 17 octobre 1722 par Vaudreuil et Bégon au Mémoire du Roy du 8 juin de la dite année, AC, C 11 A, vol. 44, p. 306; Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 14 octobre 1723, AC, C 11 A, vol. 45, p. 12v.

73. Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 octobre 1724, Coll. Mss. N. F., vol. 3, p. 108.

to Casco Bay, the latter endured grimly and struck two great blows of their own. These were aimed at the missions, which now served as rallying points for war parties. In the summer of 1723, with the Pebnoscots away hunting, the English swooped down on their village and reduced it to ashes.⁷⁴ On August 23, 1724, a large detachment of New Englanders skilfully approached Norridgewok, undetected by the Indian scouts. The fifty warriors and their families who then occupied the village only noticed that the English were upon them when the first volley rang out. The attack caused numerous dead, including twenty-one warriors and the controversial Sébastien Rasle.⁷⁵

The possibility of an Abenaki defeat was not the only danger facing New France on its Eastern flank. The peace negotiations begun by the English only a few months after the outbreak of war presented a threat almost as great. With many of the Norridgewoks withdrawn to Canada, the Pebnoscots had emerged as the principal force along the New England frontier. Since the peace party had always enjoyed considerable influence among these Indians they might easily be pressured into concluding a peace treaty harmful to French interests. In order to prevent this it was important for Vaudreuil to control the negotiations, openly or otherwise.

New England first attempted to open peace negotiations in the fall of 1722 by sending two Iroquois and two Englishmen to Norridgewok. Finding the mission deserted, these agents left a message announcing their return in two months. By that time, however,

74. Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 14 octobre 1723, AC, C 11 A, vol. 45, p. 13.

75. Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 octobre 1724, Coll. Mss. N. F., vol. 3, pp. 108 - 109.

they had preferred turning their attention to the Abenakis of St. François and Bécancour and the Iroquois of Sault St. Louis and la Montagne. Knowing that the Norridgewoks and Pebnoscots would be too weak to continue the war without their assistance, they invited them to lay down their arms. For a time the mission Indians wavered but distrust finally set in and they rejected these over-⁷⁶tures.

In October 1723 Vaudreuil took the initiative. While his Indians kept the New England frontier in turmoil he sent Ramezay's son, la Gesse, and la Ronde Denis to Boston to confer with William Dummer, acting governor of Massachusetts while Shute was on leave. The two deputies asked Dummer to stop molesting the Abenakis and produced a letter from Vaudreuil in which it was emphasized that the conclusion of peace hinged on the English withdrawing from all the lands they had seized since the treaty of Utrecht. Dummer rejected these demands. The Abenakis, he contended, were British subjects and Vaudreuil was violating the articles of peace by intervening in their quarrel with New England.⁷⁷ Vaudreuil promptly wrote back to deny this. After informing Dummer that he would have to answer to no less a person than the King of England for the death of Rasle he reiterated the conditions upon which the Indians would be prepared to consider a peace treaty: destruction of all the forts built since the treaty of Utrecht and withdrawal from Abenaki

76. Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 14 octobre 1723, AC, C 11 A, vol. 45, pp. 14 - 18.

77. Bégon au ministre, 4 juillet 1724, AC, C 11 A, vol. 46, p. 144v; Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 14 octobre 1723, AC, C 11 A, vol. 45, p. 22.

lands. Once New England had subscribed to these conditions, Vaudreuil assured Dummer that he would co-operate with him in arbitrating a treaty with the Indians.⁷⁸

Vaudreuil's inflexible stand and his ability scarcely concealed to perpetuate the war despite the Abenakis' waning enthusiasm for it may well have convinced the New Englanders that no peace could be had until the governor of New France had consented to it. Massachusetts therefore decided to negotiate directly with Vaudreuil. In March, 1725, three New England notables and an Albany merchant arrived in Montreal to begin a series of conferences, with the governor. The moment was unfortunately ill-chosen. New York was then preparing to build its blockhouse at Oswego and the French appeared in danger of being driven from Niagara. Tension gripped the colony. It was even suspected that the delegates were primarily interested in gaining information on what the French planned to do next on lake Ontario.⁷⁹ All these factors may explain, at least in part, Vaudreuil's behaviour on this occasion.

The New Englanders began by asking Vaudreuil to order the release of the prisoners detained in the missions and to stop providing the Indians with arms and ammunition. They also produced title deeds to prove their ownership of Abenaki lands. Vaudreuil, as he had always done, declared these deeds invalid and called the Abenakis of St. François and Bécancour to bear witness to his statement.⁸⁰ By that time, however, the governor was no longer

78. Copie d'une lettre écrite au gouverneur de Baston le 30 octobre 1724, AC, C 11 A, vol. 46, pp. 140v - 141.

79. Vaudreuil au ministre, 22 mai 1725, AC, C 11 A, vol. 47, p. 157.

80. Ibid., pp. 155 - 156; Bégon au ministre, 21 avril 1725, Ibid. pp. 302v - 303.

interested in concluding peace, not even on the terms he had laid down in his letter to Dummer in October, 1724. "Rien n'est plus opposé à nos intérêts que la paix des Abénakis avec les Anglois," he told Maurepas.⁸¹ Even if the English should agree to destroy all their forts and withdraw from Indian lands, he explained, the French settlements would only gain temporary relief. For New England would still be in a position to trade with the Indians and win them to their side through economic concessions. Once this was done that province's expansion eastward would begin all over again. The brutal solution to the Eastern problem which Vaudreuil was suggesting to Maurepas consisted of a permanent state of war between the English and the Indians. Although the Abenakis had not made much headway against the English since 1722 they had at least contained them and could be expected to continue doing so as long as hostilities lasted.⁸² In the eyes of Vaudreuil the Eastern Indians had become little more than pawns to be sacrificed to the cause of French security.

As soon as the Abenakis of St. François and Bécancour arrived in Montreal they were taken aside by Vaudreuil and told what he expected of them. It was not enough to ask the New Englanders to withdraw from Indian lands. They also had to insist on a large sum of money as compensation for the damages they had suffered during the war. The Abenakis were agreeable to this.⁸³ Michel Bégon, who must have ignored that Vaudreuil had arranged for the

81. Vaudreuil au ministre, 22 mai 1725, AC, C 11 A, vol. 47, p. 157v.

82. Ibid., pp. 158 - 159.

83. Ibid., p. 158.

talks to breakdown, described at length the conference which followed. The Indians not only asked for compensation but also insisted on having the boundary between English and Abenaki lands moved to the Saco River, some forty miles west of Casco Bay. Quite obviously, these conditions were impossible ones. After an exchange of angry arguments over the question of the land deeds, the conference broke up.⁸⁴ Satisfied with this result, Vaudreuil informed Maurepas that the English and Indian deputies, "bien loin de convenir de quelque chose ensemble... se quittèrent dans des dispositions bien contraire à la paix."⁸⁵ Largely as a result of the governor's enormous influence over the Indians, which he used to impress upon them his own aversion to any peaceful settlement, the war continued.

Soon after the failure of the Montreal meetings, the English opened negotiations with the Pebnoscots. After granting them a truce to allow their deputies to appear in Boston, Dummer made known his province's peace terms. They contained no concessions either to the French or the Abenakis. The English interpretation of the treaty of Utrecht remained the same, all the forts were to be reoccupied, and the Indians had to acknowledge themselves British subjects. The Pebnoscots were also made responsible for obliging the mission Indians to lay down their arms.⁸⁶ With Vaudreuil disabled by his final illness it devolved upon Longueuil to find ways of offsetting New England's renewed pressure on the Indians.

84. Bégon au ministre, 21 avril 1725, AC, C 11 A, vol. 47, pp. 301 - 306.

85. Vaudreuil au ministre, 22 mai 1725, Ibid., p. 159v.

86. Longueuil et Bégon au ministre, 31 octobre 1725, Ibid., pp. 60v - 62.

On October 1, one week before the death of Vaudreuil, a Pebnoscot delegation arrived in the colony and announced that their nation intended to end a war which had reduced three-quarters of their people to misery. This was a French war they were waging, they stated pointedly, but they had not been granted the help necessary to carry it on victoriously. Once peace was restored, on the other hand, they would enjoy the advantages of a lucrative trade with the English who were offering to take trade goods to their doorstep.⁸⁷ Speaking in the name of Vaudreuil, Longueuil attempted to impress the Pebnoscots with the argument the governor had used so frequently and with such telling success: the war was not Canada's but the Abenakis', to prevent the English from usurping their lands. This time it completely failed to produce the hoped-for effect. Before leaving the colony the Pebnoscots visited the mission Indians and asked them to break off hostilities.⁸⁸ The latter were hardly in a mood to listen. Shortly before his death Vaudreuil had managed to hurl almost four hundred of them, Abenakis, Iroquois, Algonquins and Nippissingues, against New England.⁸⁹ Now, although they were abandoned by all the eastern Indians except the weakened Norridgewoks, they rejected the proffered wampum belts. Soon, however, they too would wilt before the massive peace offensive launched by the Pebnoscots, Medokteks and New Englanders. Even the Mohawks joined in by threatening to come down on the missions if they persisted in the war.⁹⁰

87. Ibid., pp. 62 - 63.

88. Ibid., pp. 63 - 65.

89. Ibid., pp. 67v - 68.

90. Ibid., pp. 68 - 68v.

While the allies were faltering Maurepas was urging the colonial administrators to foment the war in every possible way. At the request of Longueuil he ordered the governor of Ile Royale, St. Ovide, to incite the Mic Macs to fall on the English.⁹¹ Longueuil thought that this pressure on their eastern flank would provide the Medokteks and Pebnoscots with the needed incentive to break off negotiations and resume the war. The new governor of Canada, Charles de Beauharnois, was told in his instructions to cultivate the war-like dispositions of the mission Indians.⁹² But even as this dispatch was being drafted the mission Indians were relenting as the Pebnoscots, now the most powerful faction among the Abenakis, prepared to come to terms with the English in the name of the whole nation.⁹³ The peace treaty was concluded at Falmouth, near Casco Bay, in August 1726. A war which the French had encouraged and done everything in their power to prolong thus came to an end.

Like the struggle for control of Lake Ontario, the Anglo-Abenaki war was essentially a legacy of the treaty of Utrecht. This treaty had not only reduced the number of France's possessions in North America but had also thrown open the approaches to the areas remaining under French control. The English were anxious to exploit these fissures. Immediately after the treaty of Utrecht, in both the region of the Great Lakes and of Acadia, their policy assumed an aggressive and expansionist character. Under her capable

91. Mémoire du Roy à Beauharnois et Dupuy, 14 mai 1726, AC, B, vol. 49, p. 662v.

92. Loc. cit.

93. Bégon au ministre, 20 mai 1726, AC, C 11 A, vol. 48, p. 209v.

governors, Hunter and Burnet, New York concentrated on the task of breaking the French mastery of the West; only the defensive system devised by Vaudreuil and his aides in response to this challenge saved the situation for Canada. Similarly, had Vaudreuil not taken preventive measures in the region of New England and of Acadia, the English would have expanded eastward for a considerable distance, consolidated their positions along the Canadian border, and probably won the Abenakis from the French interest. In case of war they would have found themselves in an excellent position to strike quickly and destructively at the heart of New France. It was to prevent such a development that Vaudreuil encouraged the Indians to resist English expansionism and here again he met with a good measure of success. As a result of opposition on the part of the natives, the New Englanders were unable to expand beyond the St. George River and agreed to recognize this stream as the boundary between their lands and those of the Indians in the treaty of 1726.⁹⁴ It is true that Vaudreuil, no more in the East than in the West, had been able to prevent the English from gaining ground at the expense of the French between 1713 and 1725. In both regions, however, by his bold and at times ruthless tactics, he did succeed in limiting the damages suffered by New France during this most critical period of her history.

94. Résultat des conférences et pourparlers tenus par les Anglois avec quelques sauvages abénakis à Falmouth dans la Casco Bay... AC, C 11 A, vol. 48, pp. 117 - 117v.; also NYCD, vol. 9, pp. 966 - 967.

CHAPTER XIV

Fruits of Victory

Until now considerable attention has been given to Vaudreuil's military policy and to his conduct of Canada's relations with the English colonies and the Indian tribes. It is now time to turn to the domestic aspects of the governor's career, notably his relations with other colonial administrators, his interest in the fur trade, and his involvement in what might be termed the colony's politics. Considered from this point of view, three stages become evident in Vaudreuil's career: a first under Pontchartrain during which he gradually strengthened his position at the head of the colony; a second under the Council of the Marine when his prestige and power were at their height; a third, from 1723 until his death, when his influence suffered a slight but nonetheless perceptible decline.

Outwardly at least placidity is the dominant feature of Vaudreuil's twenty-two year term of office. This characteristic becomes all the more striking when his administration is compared to the turbulent years of the Frontenac era. Differences in the background, temperament, and political astuteness of the two men account for this contrast. To Frontenac Canada was little more than a haven from his creditors and in his later years he eagerly solicited an appointment in France;^I Vaudreuil on the other hand

1. W.J. Eccles, Frontenac, the Courtier Governor, p. 203.

was tied to the colony by fortune, family, and interest. This considerable difference in the relationship of the two governors to Canada could not but be reflected in their attitude and actions. Frontenac was also vain, quick-tempered, and almost completely lacking in self-control. Vaudreuil, for his part, was cautious and conciliating. Until 1714 he largely devoted himself to the difficult task of consolidating his position. The younger Raudot may well have provided the keynote to this part of Vaudreuil's career when he stated that he had frequently heard him use the expression "qu'il valoit mieux se dédire que de se détruire,"² that the governor in other words preferred a strategic retreat to a direct clash. It was only after 1716 that Vaudreuil was prepared to risk these clashes, but at that time his position both in Canada and at Versailles was so strong that he seems to have overawed most of those who might have complained against him.

Another important factor in Vaudreuil's long and successful administration was his very human approach to the duties of his office. "J'ay cru qu'il estoit bien plus d'un gouverneur comme moy d'entrer dans la misère du peuple que de le réduire à la dernière des nécessités qui est le désespoir," he wrote in 1706 to explain why he had not punished the ringleaders of a riot which had occurred in Montreal two years previously.³ Again, in 1712, he told Pontchartrain of his conviction "que c'est plutôt par la douceur que par la sévérité qu'on vient à bout des hommes."⁴

2. A.D. Raudot au ministre, 30 juin 1709, AC, C 11 G, vol. 4, p. 241.

3. Vaudreuil au ministre, 4 novembre 1706, AC, C 11 A, vol. 24, p. 222.

4. Vaudreuil au ministre, 6 novembre 1712, AC, C 11 A, vol. 33, p. 60v.

Vaudreuil's philosophy of government and his method of dealing with problems did not escape the attention of his contemporaries. Mother Juchereau, the superior of the Hotel Dieu of Quebec, speaks of "une bonté qui luy est naturelle."⁵ It also pleased the humanitarian minister although the latter constantly feared that Vaudreuil might be swayed too far in the direction of leniency. On the question of the Montreal riot he did not mince his words in calling for more firmness and less "molesse" in the future.⁶ Yet, in the margin of the dispatch of 1712, he noted his approval of Vaudreuil's attitude although he added, on a tone that is heavy with paternalism: "il faut aussi punir ceux qui ne changent point leur mauvaise conduite et ne marquer de l'estime que pour les bons sujets."⁷

Vaudreuil was not obliged to rely uniquely on his talents to maintain himself at the head of the colony. Soon after becoming minister of the marine in 1698, Pontchartrain appears to have taken a personal interest in his career and to have considered him somewhat as his protégé. How and when Vaudreuil first came to the minister's attention is difficult to ascertain. It may have been through the good offices of Denonville who had spent several years at the court after leaving Canada; or during one of his own voyages to France in the 1690's, when Pontchartrain was assisting his father in the conduct of the affairs of the ministry. But wherever the origins of the relationship may lie its importance cannot be

5. Juchereau de St. Ignace et Duplessis de Ste. Hélène, Les Annales de l'Hotel Dieu de Québec, 1636 - 1716, p. 320.

6. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 9 juin 1706, AC, B, vol. 27, p. 223.

7. Vaudreuil au ministre, 6 novembre 1712, AC, C 11 A, vol. 33, p. 60v.

doubted. Even when Cadillac was at the zenith of his power and Pontchartrain was addressing Vaudreuil in threatening terms, he managed to temper his sharp comments with expressions of sympathy and with assurances of his desire to please the governor and his family.⁸ With the passing of time the minister's interest in the fortunes of the Vaudreuils appears to have grown. Thus, when the governor expressed concern for his wife and nine children who would be left penniless in case of his death, Pontchartrain noted reassuringly in the margin of the abstract: "Le Roy y aura attention, il peut être tranquille sur cela."⁹ As for Vaudreuil, the manner in which he spoke of the minister shows very well that he considers him to have been one of the chief forces in his career.¹⁰ His declarations on this subject were not mere rhetoric. It was during Pontchartrain's tenure that Vaudreuil grew from an obscure commander of the Canadian troops into one of the leading figures in the French colonial world.

In the early years of his administration, Pontchartrain's protection was more than an asset; it was a necessity. Vaudreuil had become governor under very difficult conditions. The abolition of the congés and the withdrawal from the posts had not only

8. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 17 juin 1705, RAPQ 1938 - 1939, p. 71; le ministre à Vaudreuil, 9 juin 1706, AC, B, vol. 27, p. 224v.

9. Vaudreuil au ministre, [abst.] 7 novembre 1711, AC, C 11 A, vol. 32, p. 157v.

10. In 1713, Vaudreuil wrote to Pontchartrain "uniquement pour vous ouvrir mon coeur, pénétré que je suis de toutes vos bontés et sachant combien je vous suis redevable. Je m'adresse à vous, Monseigneur, comme au seul protecteur que je puisse avoir, vous suppliant très humblement de ne me pas abandonner puisque je suis votre ouvrage." Vaudreuil au ministre, 1713, AC, C 11 A, vol. 34, pp. 57 - 57v.; "Je dois à Monseigneur le comte de Pontchartrain ma fortune," wrote Vaudreuil to Maurepas one year before his death, "dont je luy conserverai toute ma vie une reconnaissance éternelle." Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 octobre 1724, AC, C 11 A, vol. 46, p. 88.

weakened his control over the West. It had also deprived him of the two richest sources of governmental patronage and enormously complicated the task of winning the support of the colonial aristocracy. This situation appears to be at the root of many of the difficulties he encountered in his early years as governor. "Le seul moyen d'attacher tout le monde dans un pays à un gouverneur général c'est l'espérance d'avoir des graces," he complained to Pontchartrain in 1708. "Il ne me reste rien icy dont je puisse disposer, pas même la moindre petite gratification."¹¹ The governor obviously considered that his position could not be secured as long as he had no favours to dispense. Subsequently, both his efforts and those of his wife would be largely directed to the task of strengthening their control of the Canadian patronage.

While Vaudreuil was in this unfavorable position he had become involved in a conflict with the trio of Cadillac, Ramezay, and d'Auteuil. The threat, as already explained,¹² was a serious one. In 1706, when Pontchartrain threatened Vaudreuil with demotion from his post, victory had appeared almost within the grasp of his adversaries. The governor, however, had refused to panic. Instead of attempting to match the violent tone of his opponents he had countered with the accusation that they were acting out of a spirit of faction. In order to strengthen his position he had applied himself to winning the friendship of the Raudots who had arrived in the colony in 1705. The tactic paid rich dividends. While Vaudreuil's fortunes were at their lowest ebb, the Raudots spoke very

11. Vaudreuil au ministre, 5 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 28, p. 144.

12. See above pp. 154 - 155; 163 - 165.

highly of him in their dispatch to the minister.¹³ Soon afterwards the opposition began to break up. D'Auteuil's sister-in-law, the dame la Forest, was then involved in a lawsuit with an individual named Berthelot. D'Auteuil's efforts to intervene on her behalf involved him in a quarrel with the Raudots and led to his revocation as attorney-general.¹⁴ In 1709, Cadillac was crushed by d'Aigremont's report and transferred to Louisiana. Only Ramezay, now thoroughly cowed, remained on the scene. The routing of the opposition relieved the pressure under which Vaudreuil had been working since 1703; but hardly had these difficulties cleared up when new ones arose between the governor and the Raudots.

This quarrel with the intendants was not a particularly surprising development. Unlike Vaudreuil, who had quickly adjusted to Canadian ways after his arrival in the colony in 1687, the Raudots viewed their new environment with obvious distaste. The streak of crudeness present in all frontier societies repelled the son. "Ce n'est point l'honête homme qu'on y respecte, C'est celui qui sait se faire craindre par son mauvais esprit, par ses manières hautes et impérieuses et par ses impostures," he once wrote. "Elevé et ayant vécu sous un autre ciel... je souffre, Monseigneur, de voir toutes ces choses."¹⁵ The father, for his part, deplored the ignorance of the notaries and judges and the character of the Canadians. Deeply conservative and paternalistic in temperament

13. J. et A.D. Raudot au ministre, 11 novembre 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 26, p. 176v, p. 191v.

14. G. Frégault, "Politique et politiciens au début du XVIIIe siècle," Ecrits du Canada-français, vol. 11 (1961), pp. 164 - 172.

15. A.D. Raudot au ministre, 30 juin 1709, AC, C 11 G, vol. 4, pp. 207v - 208.

he disliked what he termed "l'esprit des affaires" and longed for the simplicity of an idealized past. This simplicity he regarded as ideal for the flowering of the two cardinal social virtues: hard work on the part of the inhabitants and an impartial rendering of justice by the governing authorities.¹⁶ In fact, Jacques Raudot seemed obsessed by the judicial portion of his duties. In his anxiety to make the court of law accessible to everyone and to prevent the rich and powerful from oppressing the weak and the poor he decided to judge everything himself. Although he assured the minister that he was only acting in this manner out of pity for the poor¹⁷ and not at all for the purpose of monopolizing the field, other judges complained that they were left with nothing to do.¹⁸ The military estate, however, claimed immunity from the civil authorities and escaped from the intendant's jurisdiction. This irked Raudot no end and he even accused Vaudreuil of encouraging the military officers to persist in this habit.¹⁹ The governor may well have done so, for he was probably growing annoyed with the superior airs affected by the Raudots, sometimes obviously for his own benefit. In view of his meagre schooling they seem to have adopted a condescending attitude toward him and to have frequently volunteered their advice. Vaudreuil disregarded it. The governor, Jacques Raudot complained, "prend

16. J. Raudot au ministre, 10 novembre 1707, AC, C 11 A, vol. 26, pp. 150 - 150v.

17. J. Raudot au ministre, 2 novembre 1706, AC, C 11 A, vol. 24, pp. 332 - 332v.

18. la Martinière au ministre, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, p. 255.

19. Raudot au ministre, [abst.] 15 et 20 septembre 1709, AC, C 11 A, vol. 30, p. 451.

toujours dans les affaires de conséquence ses résolutions tout seul ou avec des gens que tout le monde connoist estre incapables de luy donner de bons avis."²⁰

The character of the Raudots, which exasperated several high-ranking Canadians, was a two-edged weapon since it also exposed the intendants to caricature and ridicule. Early in 1708 satirical songs about them began to circulate in the streets of Quebec. Vaudreuil's entourage was apparently responsible for this initiative. Several of the songs emanated from the prolific pen of d'Esgly, captain of the governor's guards. Even Madame de Vaudreuil had written one. Raudot stiffly assured Pontchartrain that her effort was so much water off a duck's back "puisque'elle me souhaite bien loing d'elle et de ce pays."²¹ Had the intendant not so completely lacked a sense of humor his troubles with Vaudreuil might have been largely avoided.

From that time onwards relations between the governor and the intendant quickly deteriorated. Both Vaudreuil and Raudot claimed the right to appoint the inspector of fortifications and both proceeded to do so rather than yield to the other on the issue.²² The climax to the quarrel was reached in the fall of 1708, upon the death of Baudault, surgeon-major at the Hotel Dieu in Montreal. Although Baudault had designated his successor before dying, Raudot appointed Forestier to succeed him. Dumesnil - Noré, acting as the commander of the troops in the absence of d'Alogny, disagreed

20. Raudot au ministre, 20 septembre 1709, Ibid., p. 206.

21. Ibid., p. 168.

22. Levasseur de Néré au ministre, [abst.] 30 octobre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, p. 236v; Raudot au ministre, 23 octobre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 28, pp. 281v - 282.

with the intendant's choice. Over the protests of Raudot, but with the support of Vaudreuil, he summoned the twenty-eight infantry captains to an assembly where they repudiated Raudot's nominee and upheld Baudault's.²³ Although the King's ship had weighed anchor when this development occurred, Raudot sent a canoe racing after it with a dispatch describing this latest affront to his authority.²⁴ Unfortunately, the King's vessel had so much of a head start that the canoemen were forced to give up the chase.

By 1709 Vaudreuil found himself in a serious predicament. Raudot's anger had not cooled during the winter; it had grown. The intendant had prepared a voluminous dispatch which rambled on through eighty-five pages of folio and in which he laid out in great detail the innumerable grievances that had been accumulating since his arrival in the colony.²⁵ Vaudreuil was the worst of despots. He intimidated the judiciary. Everyone but the friends of the régime trembled beneath his yoke. He alienated the Indians by requesting exorbitant gifts from them. The length of the dispatch, its poor organization, and the anger it reflected on almost every page must have considerably softened its impact on the minister. Pontchartrain may also have wondered how Vaudreuil, who had been repeatedly accused of weakness up to that point, could become transformed into a tyrant almost overnight. Complaints, however, were reaching him from other sources. Raudot fils had

23. Raudot au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, Ibid., pp. 296 - 297v; Déclaration des capitaines du détachement de la marine en Canada, 15 novembre 1708, Ibid., p. 310.

24. J. Raudot au ministre, 17 novembre 1708, Ibid., pp. 306 - 308.

25. J. Raudot au ministre, 20 septembre 1709, AC, C 11 A, vol. 30, pp. 146 - 229.

also submitted a lengthy dispatch in which he vehemently criticized Vaudreuil's defensive strategy during the crisis of 1709.²⁶ The previous year d'Aigremont had submitted his report. Although he had saved his most destructive blows for Cadillac, Vaudreuil had also come in for a good measure of criticism. The governor stood accused of maintaining trading agents at Michilimackinac, of allowing his deputies to turn diplomatic missions to commercial ends, of extorting gifts from the Indians.²⁷ Pontchartrain had reacted to this by pressing d'Aigremont for more details and by forbidding Vaudreuil to accept gifts in the future.²⁸ The governor may have begun to fear that various elements in the colony were on the point of uniting against him. Having just weathered one struggle with Cadillac, Ramezay, and d'Auteuil, which had come close to costing him his political career, he was hardly in the mood to undergo another similar ordeal. This situation may well explain Madame de Vaudreuil's mysterious departure for France, aboard la Bellone, in the fall of 1709. "On peut se persuader qu'elle y a des affaires bien pressées puisqu'elle se risque dans un navire de cent vingt tonneaux," observed A.D. Raudot.²⁹

It is unfortunate that so little is known about this remarkable woman who now began to play an increasingly important role

26. A.D. Raudot au ministre, 30 juin 1709, AC, C 11 G, vol. 4, pp. 203v - 242.

27. d'Aigremont au ministre, 14 novembre 1708, AC, C 11 A, vol. 29, p. 71v.

28. Le ministre à d'Aigremont, 6 juillet 1709, AC, B, vol. 30, p. 172; le ministre à Vaudreuil, 6 juillet 1709, Ibid., p. 160; d'Aigremont au ministre, 18 octobre 1710, AC, C 11 A, vol. 31, pp. 175v - 176.

29. A.D. Raudot au ministre, 30 juin 1709, AC, C 11 G, vol. 4, p. 241v.

in Vaudreuil's career. She was thirty-six years old when she arrived in France early in 1710, almost unknown even to Pontchartrain who had only received a few letters from her. Vaudreuil must therefore have gambled on the possibility that her personal qualities would offset the handicap of an obscure birth and colonial background and win her a place in court circles. What some of these qualities were can be easily inferred. In view of her almost instantaneous success at Versailles, she must have been intelligent, quick-witted, and more than usually attractive. Other personality traits are fully evident; ambition and aggressiveness are visible in almost all her actions. The contrast between the governor, who was something of an introvert, and his vivacious wife must have been striking indeed. Denis Riverin once described Vaudreuil as "un esprit qui est absolument gouverné par une femme avide qui n'a d'autre but que de ruyner cette colonie pour enrichir sa famille."³⁰ But in spite of people like Riverin, who sought to block her ascent, she rose rapidly in ministerial favours. In 1712 she was made under-governess to the children of the duc de Berry.³¹ Already, at that time, her influence on Canadian affairs was immense. "A présent tout est avili," moaned Riverin,³² "et ce n'est plus qu'une femme qui règne tant présente qu'absente."

In a sense, Riverin was right. Madame de Vaudreuil worked relentlessly and touched upon every subject of interest to her

30. Riverin au Conseil de la Marine, 31 juillet 1716, AC, C 11 A, vol. 36, p. 309.

31. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 4 juillet 1713, AC, B, vol. 35, p. 307v.; Juchereau de St. Ignace et Duplessis de Ste. Hélène, Les Annales de l'Hotel Dieu de Québec, 1636 - 1716, p. 400.

32. Riverin au Conseil de la Marine, 9 avril 1716, AC, C 11 A, vol. 36, p. 316v.

family and Canada. She spoke in favour of the revival of the congés and the reoccupation of Michilimackinac.³³ In the critical period from 1709 to 1711 she begged the minister to send men and supplies to the colony.³⁴ She solicited honours for her husband, promotions for her son.³⁵ Not least important, she managed to corner the colonial patronage. Petitions and demands arriving from Canada were referred to her for comment; her verdict was carefully noted in the margin of the abstract; some persons even preferred addressing their requests directly to Madame de Vaudreuil so that she might present them to the minister in their name. This was almost a certain guarantee of success.³⁶ Nor did she make any secret of her influence at court. On the contrary, it was part of her strategy to make as many persons as possible aware of it. "Il [Pontchartrain] ne lui refuse rien," stated Ruette d'Auteuil in a passage which describes very well Madame de Vaudreuil's activities at Versailles. "Elle dispose de tous les emplois du Canada, elle écrit de toutes parts dans les ports de mer du bien

33. Madame de Vaudreuil au ministre, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 30, p. 425.

34. See above p. 139.

35. Madame de Vaudreuil au ministre, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 30, pp. 428 - 429; Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 10 mai 1710, AC, B, vol. 32, p. 300v.; Le ministre à Madame de Vaudreuil, 9 septembre 1710, Ibid., p. 386v.; Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 octobre 1710, AC, C 11 A, vol. 31, p. 14; Le ministre à Madame de Vaudreuil, 22 décembre 1710, AC, B, vol. 32, p. 508; Le ministre à Madame de Vaudreuil, 18 juin 1712, AC, B, vol. 34, p. 318v; le ministre à Bégon, 25 juin 1712, Ibid., p. 354v.; le ministre à Madame de Vaudreuil, AC, B, vol. 34, p. 389v.; Madame de Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 20 juillet 1717, AM, B.1, vol. 23, p. 37v.

36. On the placets of Hertel de Rouville and Lotbinière, Pontchartrain noted: "Donné par Madame de Vaudreuil, m'en faire souvenir et y avoir attention." Canada, 1711, AC, D 2 D, carton 1, p. 16, p. 19.

et du mal qu'elle peut faire auprès de lui, elle offre sa faveur, elle menace de son crédit; ce qu'il y a de plus certain en tout ce qu'elle dit c'est qu'elle imprime beaucoup de terreur et qu'elle impose silence à la plupart de ceux qui pourroient parler contre son mari."³⁷ Her enormous influence at the court effectively crushed any opposition that might have developed against the governor either in Canada or in France. To make her control of colonial affairs still more complete, Pontchartrain even agreed to supply her with a précis of all the complaints he might receive against Vaudreuil.³⁸

While Madame de Vaudreuil was consolidating the governor's position at court to a point never before achieved by his predecessors, the clouds which had obscured the Canadian scene had begun to lift. At their own request the Raudots had been recalled to France and replaced by Michel Bégon in 1712. With their departure the slate was wiped clean of Vaudreuil's domestic enemies. By that date, moreover, a cease-fire agreed upon in Europe had brought the War of the Spanish Succession to an end. Vaudreuil had seen the colony safely through these trying times and in recognition of his services he was made Commandeur de l'Ordre militaire de St. Louis.³⁹ This signal honour set the seal of royal approval to his policy and indicated in spectacular fashion the esteem and respect in which he was held at Versailles.

37. d'Auteuil, *Mémoire de l'état présent du Canada*, 1712, RAPQ 1922 - 1923, p. 50.

38. Madame de Vaudreuil au ministre, 1709, RAPQ 1946 - 1947, pp. 409 - 410.

39. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 18 juin 1712, AC, B, vol. 34, p. 321.

Not only Vaudreuil and his family but the Canadian population as well profited from the influence the governor commanded. As the war came to an end various projects to increase the national revenue were under consideration in France. Because of a shortage of funds, Pontchartrain stated, the King could no longer assume the full burden of the Canadian budget as he had done in the past. Henceforth the Canadians would have to contribute to the colonial expenses.⁴⁰ By calling the minister's attention to the considerable effort the inhabitants had made during the war, under the form of corvées and service in the militia, and to the property losses they had suffered as a result of the capture of several French vessels, Vaudreuil and Bégon dissuaded him from putting the taxation scheme into effect.⁴¹ The Canadian merchants also had special reason to be grateful to Vaudreuil. During his voyage to France in 1714 he had objected to a proposal calling for the sale of government merchandise in the colony on the grounds that it would lead to a concentration of Canada's commerce in the hands of the King.⁴² On another occasion he attempted to limit the periods during which the forains might trade in the colony.⁴³ No less than the merchants the seigneurs also benefited from the governor's protection. On a number of occasions, the court called

40. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 25 juin 1713, AC, B, vol. 35, p. 282v.

41. Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 20 septembre 1714, AC, C 11 A, vol. 34, pp. 246v - 247v.

42. Levasseur de Néré au Conseil de la Marine, 26 mars 1716, AM, B 1, vol. 8, pp. 534 - 534v.

43. Vaudreuil au ministre, 2 novembre 1724, AC, C 11 A, vol. 46, p. 128.

upon the administration to enforce the edicts of Marly of 1711, by virtue of which uncleared concessions reverted to the Crown. Vaudreuil managed to find ways to elude these instructions and maintain the seigneurs in possession of their concessions.⁴⁴ On all these occasions Vaudreuil had acted more as the spokesman and protector of colonial interests than as a representative of the Ministry of the Marine.

Despite influence, prestige, and a salary that appears substantial at first sight, Vaudreuil never was a wealthy man. His salary was drawn on two sources, the royal treasury and the Western domain. As governor - general he received 12,000 livres from the Crown and as governor of the district of Quebec, 3,000 livres from the domain. The Crown granted him an additional 3,000 livres to pay for the transportation of personal supplies. Furthermore, the salaries of his twenty guards and that of the garrison of the Chateau St.Louis, amounting to 12,518 livres, were paid to him directly by the Crown and the domain jointly.⁴⁵ It was not difficult to pocket part of this sum, perhaps most of it, by dispensing with the full companies and maintaining skeleton staffs. It would therefore appear safe to say that Vaudreuil's annual revenue, exclusive of gratifications, ranged in the vicinity of 23,000 livres. This was by far the largest income in the colony, but it was not sufficient to enable the governor to meet all the

44. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 5 juillet 1718, AC, B, vol. 40, p. 476v; Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, 23 mai 1719, AC, B, vol. 41, p. 518; Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 26 octobre 1719, AC, C 11 A, vol. 41, pp. 12v - 13.

45. Etat des officiers de guerre de la Nouvelle-France et des appointements qu'ils reçoivent par an, s.d., AC, D 2 C, vol. 49, pp. 4 - 4v.

expenses he was obliged to incur.

The public obligations of a governor-general were numerous and costly. He was the King's representative in the colony, the leading figure in a society that was fond of receptions and soirées. The governor was expected to fill his high office with becoming dignity and perhaps also with a touch of ostentation. Robert Livingston's journal of his visit to Quebec in the winter of 1710 - 1711 provides an interesting insight into the capital's social life and the governor's part in it.⁴⁶ Social obligations also attached to the governor's functions as commander-in-chief of the colonial army and as director of Indian affairs and of relations with the English colonies. During the war Vaudreuil had received several New England embassies and lodged them in his home for the duration of their stay in the colony. Any number of visitors could be expected to call on the governor to discuss official business with him. As a result, the table in the Vaudreuil household was always set for fourteen persons, sometimes for as many as twenty-five and thirty.⁴⁷ Because Vaudreuil had to spend several months each year in Montreal, usually from March to September, to be close to western developments, he had to provide himself

46. Typical passages from Livingston's journal read as follow: December 10, I supped at ye intendants', was very hansomly entertained, ye Governor, Gentlemen and Ladies of ye town were guests, and were diverted with musick and dancing. December 11, ... at night ye Governor treated nobly with musick and dancing. December 21, Sup't this night at ye intendant's had a splendid entertainment with musick and dancing, and had ye drums and musick at my door. December 25, The Govr. Genll. had a supper this night, where were at least fifty persons of distinction and ye whole entertainment in great splendor. CSPA 1710 - 1711, pp. 380 - 381.

47. Madame de Vaudreuil au ministre, 29 octobre 1724, AC, C 11 A, vol. 46, p. 118.

with suitable quarters in that city. The house he built there for himself, his family, and his staff was officially estimated at 39,230 livres and the land at 19,000 livres.⁴⁸ Vaudreuil's house-staff was an elaborate one. When he returned to Canada in 1716 he took sixteen servants back with him.⁴⁹ To-day, many of these expenses could be debited to an expense account. They then had to be met out of the regular salary.

To make matters more difficult, Vaudreuil had been dealt a number of major financial blows during the War of the Spanish Succession. When the storeship la Seine was captured in 1704 it was carrying from 30,000 to 40,000 livres of the governor's personal belongings.⁵⁰ Beginning in 1706, when French finance buckled beneath the weight of war, part of his salary was paid in billets de monnaie on which the bearer lost 50%.⁵¹ Even his salary was irregularly paid. At one point, in 1716, it was almost two years in arrears. Vaudreuil was then in France on leave and the situation forced him to live on credit and by borrowing.⁵² When Madame de Vaudreuil returned to Canada in 1724, she claimed that her husband

48. Dupuy au ministre, 30 octobre 1727, AM, C 7, vol. 340, dossier Vaudreuil.

49. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, s.d., AM, B 1, vol. 8, pp. 532v - 533.

50. Beauharnois au ministre, 17 novembre 1704, AC, C 11 A, vol. 22, p. 43; Madame de Vaudreuil au ministre, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 30, p. 428; Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, s.d., AM, B 1, vol. 8, p. 347v.; Vaudreuil once estimated at 80,000 livres the total losses he had suffered during the war years. Vaudreuil au ministre, 1711, AC, D 2 D, carton 1, p. 2; Vaudreuil au ministre, 7 novembre 1711, AC, C 11 A, vol. 32, p. 157v.

51. Madame de Vaudreuil au ministre, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 30, p. 428v.

52. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, s.d., AM, B 1, vol. 6, pp. 172v - 173.

had gone into debt by 13,000 livres in one year.⁵³

No less than public commitments and the crisis of French finance, private obligations also bore hard on Vaudreuil. His six sons had all chosen military careers, four of them in France, two in Canada. The army at that time, perhaps not so much in the colonies as in France itself, was strongly aristocratic in character and financially exacting on its members. Acceding to the upper echelons was difficult. Positions there were not numerous and a horde of applicants fought for the few openings that did occur. Yet it was only when an officer reached the higher ranks that he could hope to derive some financial benefit from his position. As long as he detained only a minor commission he was forced to depend largely on his private fortune to make ends meet. Supporting his sons in this expensive milieu must have proved a considerable drain on Vaudreuil's revenue. In fact, he often pointed to the expenses they were causing him when motivating his demands for gratifications.⁵⁴

As late as 1725 only the eldest son, Louis-Philippe, lieutenant in the navy, appears to have been self-supporting. The others, to a lesser or greater degree, still depended on paternal help.⁵⁵ Shortly after his father's death, nineteen year old Joseph-Hyacinthe realized that he could no longer manage a living as ensign with the French Guards. He accordingly resigned his position in favour of a captaincy in the troops of St.Domingue

53. Madame de Vaudreuil au ministre, 29 octobre 1724, AC, C 11 A, vol. 46, p. 118.

54. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, s.d., AM, B 1, vol. 6, p. 123v.

55. Vaudreuil paid one annual pension of 2,000 livres to his second son, Philippe-Antoine, captain with the Régiment du Roy, Infanterie, and another of 1,200 livres to his third son, Jean, second lieutenant with the Grenadiers. Madame de Vaudreuil au ministre, 1728, AM, C 7, vol. 340, dossier Vaudreuil.

which his mother had procured him.⁵⁶ The decision proved judicious for, by 1753, he had risen to the position of governor-general of this colony. Two years later his brother Pierre, the fourth of Vaudreuil's sons and perhaps also his favorite, became governor of Canada.

Despite these multiple financial obligations and the pressure of public affairs, Vaudreuil never forgot the family estates in Languedoc. It will be recalled that in 1708, after a prolonged legal battle, he had finally succeeded in establishing his title to the barony of Vaudreuil, but no sooner had this vexing problem been settled than the governor was plunged into another expensive and complex controversy with the consuls of the town of Revel. The obligation to which the inhabitants of the barony were subjected of contributing to Revel's municipal expenses was a long standing grievance with the Rigauds. The consuls had later added insult to injury by entering several of Vaudreuil's biens nobles on the list of taxable goods they had drawn up in 1690.⁵⁷ Like his brother Philippe I, who had unfortunately died before being able to accomplish anything, Vaudreuil was determined to put a stop to these exactions. In 1710, in order to strengthen his position, he purchased the governorship of Revel for 10,000 livres.⁵⁸ He also granted powers of attorney to his mother-in-law, his wife, and

56. Madame de Vaudreuil au ministre, 17 janvier 1726, AM, C 7, vol. 340, dossier Vaudreuil.

57. Demande en restitution de tailles que Monsieur de Chateaufort qui est aux droits des fermiers judiciaires de la terre de Vaudreuil fait à la communauté de Revel depuis le cadastre qu'elle fit faire en l'année 1690, s.d., ADHG, Commune de Revel, série 2E, 654.

58. The act of purchase, dated August 5, 1710, is recorded in AN, E, vol. 819, pp. 327 - 328.

finally to his son Philippe-Antoine so that they might attend to his Languedoc interests.⁵⁹

Success did not come readily. By 1713, Madame de Marson had managed to recover some 3,926 livres of the 4,956 which the tax on the barony's biens nobles had yielded,⁶⁰ but she had been unable to gain any measure of relief for the censitaires. The consuls subbornly maintained that these inhabitants were obliged to assume their share of the municipal expenses by the terms of the act which had joined the barony to Revel in 1518. Although both sides retained legal counsel to justify their pretensions⁶¹ the difficulty remained. In 1719, it was the turn of Madame de Vaudreuil to appear on the scene and to fail at the task of finding a solution. To be thwarted by the anonymous consuls of an obscure town after her successes at Versailles must have indeed appeared intolerable. But although she stormed at the consuls and lodged a protest against their conduct with the intendant of Languedoc, Bernages,⁶² it was only in 1724 that the matter was finally settled. At that time the governor's son, Philippe-Antoine, succeeded in negotiating a settlement which won the long coveted immunity for

59. Copie de procuration faite par Messire Philippe de Rigaud, marquis de Vaudreuille, 20 octobre 1722 et 23 mai 1723, ADHG, Commune de Revel, série 2E, 608.

60. Copie d'acte pour M^{rs}. les maire et consuls de Revel, 5 septembre 1713, ADHG, Commune de Revel, série 2E, 654, n.p.; Transaction passée devant maître Combos, notaire, le 5 octobre 1713, entre la communauté de Revel et Madame de Marson, Ibid., n.p.

61. Consultation de M. de Montaudier sur les affaires que la communauté de Revel a avec M. le marquis de Vaudreuille, 16 mai 1714, ADHG, Commune de Revel, série 2E, 608, n.p.; Consultation de M. Casseudes pour M. de Vaudreuille contre la communauté de Revel, 1714, Ibid., n.p.

62. A Monseigneur de Bernages, conseiller d'état, intendant en Languedoc, 6 août 1721, Ibid., n.p.

the inhabitants.⁶³ Freeing the barony from mortgages and taxes had required thirty-two years of tenacious efforts on Vaudreuil's part. It had caused him no end of trouble and expense. By the time of his death, however, he had the immense satisfaction of knowing that the ancestral domain would not be ruined by exactions or lost by foreclosure. Possession of the land to which the Vaudreuils had become identified over the course of centuries had been assured for future generations.

The foregoing analysis of the Vaudreuil budget shows quite clearly that the numerous expenses to which the governor was exposed could not be met out of a salary of approximately 23,000 livres paid irregularly and at times in depreciated paper. Other sources of income had to be found, something which, in Canada, could only mean turning to the fur trade. Accusations to the effect that the governor was engaged in this traffic had begun almost on the day he became governor. Although evidence exists to substantiate this accusation it also suggests that his interests in the fur trade at this early date were quite limited. Vaudreuil was well aware of Pontchartrain's stand on the question and too clever to engage in activities that might easily jeopardize his entire career. After 1716 the situation had changed. The two years Vaudreuil had spent in France had confirmed the strength of his position at the court. The Regent himself had granted him an interview and promised to look after the interests of his family.⁶⁴

63. Transaction entre M. de Vaudreuille et la communauté de Revel concernant les impositions municipales, 3 avril 1724, Ibid., n.p.

64. Vaudreuil au duc d'Orléans, 2 novembre 1716, AE, Mémoires et documents Amérique, vol. 6, pp. 174 - 175.

The Council of the Marine regarded him as almost indispensable in all matters relating to North America. In 1717 this body granted him a gratification of 6,000 livres, and in 1721 the Grand Croix de l'Ordre militaire de St. Louis, one of France's highest decorations.⁶⁵ The governor took advantage of this situation by demanding favours that would facilitate his personal participation in the fur trade. In 1702, he had received from Callières and Beauharnois the grant of the seigneurie des Cascades, including the commercially strategic Ile aux Tourtes. The Council of the Marine ratified this concession in 1716, something which Pontchartrain had steadfastly refused to do.⁶⁶ Shortly after his departure Madame de Vaudreuil solicited the grant of the lake Temiscamingue trading post,⁶⁷ situated near the sources of the Ottawa river. Denis Riverin, vigilant but politically impotent, had not failed to notice in what direction these activities were pointing. Vaudreuil's demand for the revival of the congés, he claimed, was a step the governor was taking to consolidate the control of the fur trade in his own hands and in those of his partisans.⁶⁸ Subsequent events proved him to be partly right.

By the 1720's Vaudreuil's involvement in the fur trade was causing growing stirrs of discontent in the colony. Earlier in his

65. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 12 octobre 1717, AC, C 11 A, vol. 38, p. 102; Provisions de Grand Croix de l'Ordre militaire de St. Louis, 24 avril 1721, AM, C 7, vol. 340, dossier Vaudreuil.

66. Brevet de confirmation de concession accordée en Canada au sr. marquis de Vaudreuil, 5 mai 1716, AC, B, vol. 38, pp. 218 - 218v.

67. Madame de Vaudreuil au comte de Toulouse, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 38, pp. 170 - 170v.

68. See above, p. 247, note 25.

career complaints had emanated from a small group of individuals easily identified as his political enemies. They were now more widespread and came from groupings and persons with different interests and background: the Montreal merchants, the inhabitants of Detroit, the abbé Breslay to whom the governor had granted Ile aux Tourtes in 1704 to clear himself of the accusation of using it as a vantage point for the fur trade. Even Claude de Ramezay, who had not been heard from for some fifteen years, raised his voice in protest. "Il retire de toute part tout autant qu'il peut," the governor of Montreal stated of Vaudreuil. Ramezay accused his superior of selling congés and of exacting tributes from the officers commanding at the western posts. When these tributes were not forthcoming the governor allegedly chastised the offending parties by authorizing those who bore his permits to poach on their territory.⁶⁹

In all likelihood these allegations contain a good deal of truth. The enormous growth of the fur trade, which occurred between 1717 and 1725 despite the ban on the congés, has been analyzed in a previous chapter. Vaudreuil, who was responsible for the administration of this region was certainly aware of the situation and perhaps also largely responsible for it. The fact that he objected to the biennial visits of the posts Louvigny was supposed to carry out as commander-in-chief of the Upper Country,⁷⁰ suggests that he hoped to keep the home authorities in the dark on certain

69. Ramezay au ministre, 15 octobre 1723, AC, C 11 A, vol. 45, pp. 338 - 338v.

70. Vaudreuil et Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, 26 octobre 1720, AC, C 11 A, vol. 42, p. 29.

aspects of western policy. Indeed, if the situation at Detroit was typical of that of the West in general he had good reason for doing so.

Since 1717 Detroit was commanded by Alphonse de Tonty, one of Vaudreuil's protégés, who was said to have obtained the post by presenting the governor with an annual gift of 3,000 livres.⁷¹ Although Tonty was far more skilful than Cadillac in his dealings with the Indians he simply appears to have stepped into his predecessor's shoes when it came to exploiting the settlers. In 1721, a group of them had complained to the Council of the Marine of the various exactions to which Tonty was subjecting them. They were forced to contribute to the Indian gift fund; they were excluded from the small trade which they had carried on with the Indians since the days of Cadillac; so that the commander might better monopolize the sale of brandy they were forbidden to keep this commodity in their homes; no forain could trade at Detroit unless he paid an exorbitant tax. Despite these numerous grievances those inhabitants who had complained to Vaudreuil "n'ont eu aucune justice et n'ont fait que s'attirer son indignation."⁷² At this time Tonty was also engaged in a controversy with Cadillac's attorney, Baudry de la Marche, who was trying to establish the founder's title to certain lands and buildings at the post. Lawsuits, which could not be carried through because Tonty was not domiciled in the colony and had no attorney there, were accumulating

71. le sr. Baudry de la Marche au ministre, s.d., [P.A.C. transcript] AC, C 11 A, vol. 49, p. 521.

72. Placet présenté par certains habitants du Détroit, 4 septembre 1721, AC, C 11 A, vol. 43, pp. 312 - 313v.

against him in Canada. The court insisted time and again that he appoint a legal representative or expose himself to being revoked as commander.⁷³ Vaudreuil, however, did not co-operate. Not only did he defend Tonty against those who attacked him but he also facilitated his escape when he briefly appeared in Canada in the fall of 1724. Pretending that his presence was essential at Detroit he ordered him to return there immediately thus foiling Bégon who was preparing him to question him on his administration of the post.⁷⁴ Finally, in 1727, with Vaudreuil no longer there to protect him, Tonty was removed from the command of the post.

While Vaudreuil had a stake in the Great Lakes trade his principal interests lay in the region of the Ottawa River. This waterway, which drained the rich beaver territories of the Northwest, possessed great commercial value particularly for Montreal whose economy depended largely on the volume of pelts coming down this river. Through the two posts he now controlled, however, the governor was in a position to dominate the entire Ottawa trade. From Ile aux Tourtes he might intercept the Indians just before they reached Montreal. At Temiscamingue, he might cut off much of the trade at its source. In view of this it is not surprising that Montreal's mercantile interests should soon raise their voice in angry protests.

Shortly after his return to the colony in 1716 Vaudreuil had farmed out his newly ratified Ile aux Tourtes concession to

73. Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 19 octobre 1723, AC, C 11 A, vol. 45, p. 39v.; le ministre à Vaudreuil et Robert, 30 mai 1724, AC, B, vol. 47, p. 1118; Vaudreuil au ministre, 25 octobre 1724, AC, C 11 A, vol. 46, p. 70v.

74. Le ministre à Chazel, 29 mai 1725, AC, B, vol. 48, p. 837.

François d'Youville, a Montreal merchant. The mission of Nipissingues, which had occupied the site since 1705, was now threatened with eviction and their missionary, the abbé Breslay, asked to be maintained in possession of the island.⁷⁵ He also asked that Linctôt be re-established as commander of the fort whence he had been removed only because he would not countenance the sale of brandy and refused to pay an annual tribute of 1,000 livres to Vaudreuil.⁷⁶ The governor replied to these charges in a tone of self-sufficing arrogance. The Nipissingues, he said, were free to remain on the island for as long as they wished but the property rights were entirely his and the grant of 1705 did not derogate from them in any way.⁷⁷ The Council of the Marine was satisfied for the moment,⁷⁸ but in 1722 it told Vaudreuil of having received further complaints from the Montreal merchants. Youville was now accused of carrying on an open trade at Ile aux Tourtes and of keeping the Indians away from Montreal. The Council pointed out to Vaudreuil that trading in manufactured goods was a privilege reserved to the towns of Montreal, Three Rivers and Quebec. Outside of these urban areas traders were limited to bartering products of the soil.⁷⁹ In his reply the governor made no attempt

75. Extrait des placets présentés par M. de Breslay et Madame des Ruisseaux au sr. Quénec avec réponses de Vaudreuil et Bégon, 25 octobre 1720, AC, C 11 A, vol. 42, pp. 3 - 6.

76. Délibérations du Conseil de la Marine, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 36, p. 283.

77. Extrait des placets présentés par M. de Breslay et Madame des Ruisseaux, femme du sr. Quénec, avec réponses de Vaudreuil et Bégon, 25 octobre 1720, AC, C 11 A, vol. 42, pp. 3 - 6.

78. The Council noted, "Approuvé les réponses de M. de Vaudreuil aux représentations... du sr. de Breslay qui ne méritent point d'attention." AC, C 11 A, vol. 43, p. 187.

79. Le Conseil de la Marine à Vaudreuil, 5 mai 1722, AC, B, vol. 45, p. 765.

to deny the allegations of the Montreal merchants or to minimize the scope of Youville's commerce. On the contrary he contended that by virtue of a special clause inserted in his grant he was allowed to trade with the Indians.⁸⁰ This explanation might have satisfied the Council but it made little impression on the ministry which was revived at the end of 1722. Soon after this change in administration Ramezay had denounced in no uncertain terms the doings at Ile aux Tourtes. Youville, he claimed, debauched the Indians, his trading methods were only one step removed from sheer robbery, and the governor had profited from these operations to the tune of 10,000 écus. As a result of this situation only four canoes had found their way to Montreal in 1723 instead of an average of eighty to one hundred in previous years.⁸¹ Although Vaudreuil once more sought to defend himself by invoking the terms of his grant, Maurepas was not in the mood to listen.⁸² Curtly, he ordered the governor to abolish the Ile aux Tourtes Indian trade.⁸³ Vaudreuil complied, although grudgingly, and complaints gradually ceased.

The controversy which raged over the post of Temiscamingue was even more bitter. In 1720, Vaudreuil had leased this post to a merchant named Guillet who formed a company to exploit it.

80. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 15 octobre 1722, AC, C 11 A, vol. 44, pp. 349v- 350.

81. Ramezay au ministre, 15 octobre 1723, AC, C 11 A, vol. 45, p. 333, p. 338v.

82. See the ministry's sharp comments on the governor's dispatch. Vaudreuil au ministre, 29 septembre 1723, AC, C 11 A, vol. 45, pp. 130 - 131.

83. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 30 mai 1724, AC, B, vol. 47, p. 1155.

To justify Guillet's presence in that area the governor stated that it kept the Indians from defecting to Hudson Bay.⁸⁴ The Montreal merchants, however, thought otherwise. They claimed that Guillet charged so much for his trade goods that the Indians were being driven toward the English. Furthermore he had interpreted the territorial limits of his post in such a broad sense that he was now trading with a number of tribes who would otherwise have gone to Montreal.⁸⁵ When the Council of the Marine brought this petition to Vaudreuil's attention the latter replied with an indignant outburst against its authors, their character, and their motives. Nonetheless he did admit that Guillet had traded far beyond the limits of his concession and for this reason he announced that his lease was being cancelled immediately.⁸⁶ This lull was short-lived. Alleging that the withdrawal of the French from Temiscamingue had forced the Indians to turn to the English or expose themselves to starvation, Vaudreuil allowed Guillet and his men to return there in 1723.⁸⁷ According to the irrepressible Ramezay, Vaudreuil's decision to cancel the lease in 1722 stemmed from a disagreement with Guillet, probably over the division of the profits. The latter had subsequently managed to mollify the

84. Madame de Vaudreuil au comte de Toulouse, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 38, pp. 170 - 170v.; Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 15 octobre 1722, AC, C 11 A, vol. 44, pp. 344v - 345.

85. Mémoire des représentations sur l'adjudication qui vient d'être faite du poste de Témiscamingue, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 44, pp. 403v - 404.

86. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 15 octobre 1722, AC, C 11 A, vol. 44, pp. 348v - 349.

87. Mémoire concernant l'abandon projeté du poste de Témiscamingue, 1723, AC, C 11 A, vol. 45, p. 160.

governor by presenting him with a handsome gift in pelts.⁸⁸

When Maurepas learned of these developments he decided to put an end to the affair by instructing Bégon to farm out the post to the highest bidder and apply the sum thus obtained to the Montreal fortifications.⁸⁹ The auction was held on October 24, 1724. For an annual fee of 6,000 livres, Temiscamingue was adjudicated to Fleury de la Gorgendière, perhaps the colony's wealthiest merchant, for a period of five years.⁹⁰ Vaudreuil, however, thought that Bégon should not have included the Lièvre River and Lake Nipissingue within the limits of the concession. This had never been done before and would pose a grave threat to Montreal's commerce.⁹¹ In April, 1725, as la Gorgendière was preparing to take possession of the post, Vaudreuil renewed his objections, produced a protest signed by a group of persons whom he described as "les plus gros négocians de Montréal", and asked for a new adjudication.⁹² When Bégon brushed these protests aside and issued an ordonnance authorizing la Gorgendière to send his men to the post, the governor took it upon himself to suspend its execution until the court should make its decision known on the boundary question.⁹³

88. Ramezay au ministre, 15 octobre 1723, AC, C 11 A, vol. 45, pp. 335 - 336.

89. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 30 mai 1724, AC, B, vol. 47, p. 1154; le ministre à Vaudreuil et Robert, 3 juin 1724, Ibid., p. 1178.

90. Vaudreuil et Bégon au ministre, 2 novembre 1724, AC, C 11 A, vol. 46, pp. 48v - 49.

91. Vaudreuil au ministre, 28 octobre 1724, Ibid., p. 111.

92. Vaudreuil au ministre, 18 mai 1725, AC, C 11 A, vol. 47, pp. 149 - 154; copie de la lettre écrite par Vaudreuil à Bégon, 4 mai 1725, Ibid., pp. 285 - 285v.; Requête des habitants de Montréal contre l'adjudication du poste de Témiscamingue, Ibid., pp. 438 - 441.

93. Vaudreuil au ministre, 18 mai 1725, Ibid., pp. 151 - 151v.

Such an action on Vaudreuil's part was more than suspect. As Bégon pointed out it resulted in la Gorgendière being kept from Temiscamingue until Guillet's own lease expired on July 1, 1725. The intendant also claimed that the petition produced by Vaudreuil had been presented irregularly, signed by persons of doubtful status, and that its terms virtually placed the disputed territories at the governor's own disposal.^{93a} As in the case of Ile aux Tourtes, a large measure of self-interest is evident in this episode. With the governor's death in October, 1725, and changes in ministerial plans for Temiscamingue, the affair was closed.

The governor's fur-trading interests were only one of the factors to affect and modify the character of his administration during its last years. Vaudreuil had changed in a number of other ways with the passage of time. Confidence in his ability and in the soundness of his policy made him intolerant of criticism.⁹⁴ He was also growing vindictive toward his enemies. Upon the death of a lieutenant named Morville he was reported to have ordered that only ensigns should act as pallbearers because he and his wife "n'aimoient point cet homme."⁹⁵ Madame la Forest, sister-in-law of the governor's old enemy, Ruelle d'Auteuil, complained of "la tyrannie que M. de Vaudreuil exerce continuellement sur leur famille."⁹⁶ While tyranny may be too strong a word there is no doubt that Vaudreuil relentlessly hounded the d'Auteuil family.

93a. Bégon au ministre, 10 juin 1725, AC, C 11 A, vol. 47, pp. 217 - 217; pp. 222 - 222v; pp. 226 - 226v; le ministre à Chazel, 11 août 1725, AC, B, vol. 48, pp. 892 - 893.

94. Ramezay au ministre, 12 octobre 1723, AC, C 11 A, vol. 45, pp. 326 - 330.

95. Chaussegros de Léry au ministre, 30 septembre 1723, Ibid., p. 368v.

96. Madame la Forest au ministre, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 43, p. 196.

Although the attorney-general had left the colony in 1707, his two sons, Monceaux and la Malotière, still resided there. The private lives of these two men may not have been above reproach but their faults can hardly justify the vicious campaign Vaudreuil waged against them in his letters to the minister.⁹⁷ He also refused to grant command of the Green Bay post to the sr. Pachot, Madame la Forest's son, although this officer was eminently qualified for the position and was supported by the Council of the marine.⁹⁸ On other occasions, he showed himself surprisingly arbitrary. He once arrested and imprisoned an individual named Grouard on the suspicion of contraband. Although no proof could be found to substantiate the charges against him, Vaudreuil kept him in jail during three months. Upon learning of this, Maurepas made no effort to hide his anger. "Le Roy vous donne beaucoup d'autorité par la place de Gouverneur et Lieutenant G'nal de la Nouvelle France que vous occupés mais je vous prie de penser en même tems qu'il ne vous en donne aucune pour manquer à exécuter les Loix que Sa Ma'té a faite."⁹⁹

Although the governor's character and activities may have frequently tried the patience of his colleagues during his later years, open quarrels never developed in the high levels of the administration. Vaudreuil's considerable power at Versailles

97. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 20 octobre 1722, AC, C 11 A, vol. 44, pp. 363 - 363; Ruette d'Auteuil au ministre, 1724, AC, C 11 A, vol. 46, p. 236v.

98. Le Conseil de la Marine à Vaudreuil, 20 mai 1722, AC, B, vol. 45, p. 77lv.; Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 20 octobre 1722, AC, C 11 E, vol. 16, pp. 99 - 100.

99. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 11 août 1725, AC, B, vol. 48, p. 903.

helps to explain this situation. His influence at the court, which enabled him both to engage in the fur trade and to avoid to a large degree the unpleasant repercussions usually associated with such an activity, may have instilled sober second thoughts into those who could otherwise have been inclined to quarrel with the governor or complain against him. The manner in which the Council of the Marine had dismissed Breslay's legitimate grievances in 1720 showed the strength of Vaudreuil's position at Versailles.¹⁰⁰ More than anyone else in the colony, Bégon was made to feel this reality.

Upon arriving in Canada in 1712 this intendant, like many others before him, had shown himself inclined to impinge on the authority of the governor. He had vetoed Vaudreuil's project for the reoccupation of Michilimackinac, apparently retarded St. Castin's departure for Acadia, and insisted on countersigning some of Vaudreuil's orders.¹⁰¹ His activities in the field of commerce were also suspect. According to information reaching the minister¹⁰² the intendant had seized the wheat crop of 1714, thus acquiring a practical monopoly on shipments to the West Indies and on the bread supply. He was also reported to be operating a slaughterhouse kept supplied by agents who travelled through the countryside where they bought up all available livestock. "On m'assure qu'il se rend absolument le maitre de tout le commerce du pays et

100. See above, p. 384, note 78.

101. Le ministre à Bégon, 10 juillet 1715, AC, B, vol. 37, p. 172; for Bégon's defense, Bégon au Conseil de la Marine, s.d., AM, B 1, vol. 8, p. 170.

102. La Martinière à Bégon, 15 août 1714, AE, Mémoires et Documents, Amérique, vol. 7, pp. 11 - 16; La Martinière à St. Simon, 28 octobre 1715, Ibid., pp. 17 - 21.

que les gens du Canada sont perdus sans ressource si on ne met ordre à son activité et à ses injustices," the minister angrily informed the intendant's brother.¹⁰³ Vaudreuil, who was then in France, also complained about the manner in which the intendant was hampering his policy and the minister had immediately served the latter with a sharp reprimand.¹⁰⁴ A few months later the Council of the Marine dealt with the problem in a manner which Pontchartrain, who did not believe in concentrating too much power in the hands of far away colonial administrators, would never have considered. At Vaudreuil's request¹⁰⁵ it decreed that if discussions should arise in the future the governor's decision would prevail over that of the intendant.¹⁰⁶ By thus subordinating Bégon to Vaudreuil the Council effectively crushed any inordinate ambitions the intendant might have entertained. Thereafter his relations with Vaudreuil were peaceful although rumours persisted to the end that he was profiting on government funds and card money.¹⁰⁷

After reaching their apogée under the Council of the Marine, Vaudreuil's fortunes began to decline under Maurepas. The reason for this turn in the tide does not reside in any blunders on the governor's part. It simply appears that many persons who had

103. Le ministre à l'abbé Bégon, 17 juillet 1715, AC, B, vol. 37, p. 136.

104. Le ministre à Bégon, 10 juillet 1715, Ibid., pp. 172 - 173.

105. Mémoire au comte de Toulouse, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 36, p. 144.

106. Mémoire du Roy à Vaudreuil et Bégon, AC, B, vol. 38, p. 221v.

107. Vaudreuil au Conseil de la Marine, 11 novembre 1721, AC, C 11 A, vol. 44, pp. 178 - 182; Le Conseil de la Marine à Bégon, AC, B, vol. 44, pp. 524v - 526.

preferred to remain silent during the tenure of the Council of the Marine felt freer to complain after the liquidation of this body. Vaudreuil himself knew very well that the change in administration might entail certain inconveniences. In 1721, after an absence of twelve years, Madame de Vaudreuil had returned to Canada; but upon learning of the revival of the ministry she crossed to France once more in the fall of 1723, probably to insure that her husband's interests would not suffer from the change. Even her presence at the court could not prevent Maurepas from expressing his irritation with Vaudreuil. While the minister approved of the governor's New England and Lake Ontario policy, he also realized that permits were still being issued for the West despite the abolition of the congés and that the commanders at the posts acted as traders more than as representatives of the French authority. He was particularly annoyed with Vaudreuil's refusal to declare war on the Fox Indians who were then ravaging Upper Louisiana. To make matters worse, relations with St. Vallier, the bishop of Quebec, and with the Récollets were showing signs of strain. In 1724 the governor had attempted to pressure the commissioner-general of the Récollets into naming one of his wife's relatives superior of the Quebec convent. The commissioner refused and the Récollets took sides. Tempers flared, Vaudreuil's partisans grew abusive, and the minister intervened. Such a scandal, he told the governor, would not have occurred "si vous aviez bien voulu ne pas vous mesler des choses qui ne vous regardent pas."¹⁰⁸

108. Le ministre à Vaudreuil, 5 juin 1725, AC, B, vol. 48, p. 887.

Maurepas' patience was obviously wearing thin.

By 1725, however, the health of the aged governor was deteriorating. He had first become ill on May 10, two months after arriving in Montreal to deal with the critical situation at Niagara. On May 31, Sarrazin, his attending physician, reported that he was feeling much better although he could not be considered fully recovered.¹⁰⁹ The next health report on the governor comes from the bishop on October 4. According to St. Vallier the governor's health had lately been "fort méchante" and almost no one expected to see him recover.¹¹⁰ This was no exaggeration. On October 10, 1725, at the age of eighty-two, after serving the King for fifty-three years, twenty-two of them as governor of Canada, Vaudreuil passed away at Quebec's Chateau St. Louis.

Despite the flaws in his character which came to the surface in his later years, the inhabitants were deeply moved by the death of their governor. "C'est avec justice que nous l'avons pleuré," writes the annalist of the Ursulines, "car sous sa vigilante administration le Canada a joui d'une prospérité jusqu'alors inconnue. Pendant vingt deux ans le cultivateur, le commerçant et le militaire n'ont eu également qu'à bénir son nom."¹¹¹ This testimony provides perhaps the basic explanation for the esteem and affection in which Vaudreuil was held in Canada. In one way or another every social class was indebted to him. To the habitants he

109. Bégon au ministre, 10 juin 1725, AC, C 11 A, vol. 47, pp. 206 - 207.

110. L'évêque de Québec au ministre, 4 octobre 1725, Ibid., p. 462v.

111. Les Ursulines de Québec depuis leur établissement jusqu'à nos jours, (4 vol. Québec, 1863 - 1866), vol. 2, p. 140.

probably always remained the man who had kept the English and the Iroquois off their settlements during ten years of war. In the eyes of the merchants he was the one who had provided them with new opportunities by opening the West. Nor could anyone forget that on a number of occasions he had protected the habitants, the merchants, and the seigneurs from metropolitan projects. Despite Vaudreuil's growing self-interest and his occasional tendency to govern the colony as his own feudal domain the Canadians may have considered him as something more than a governor. In a way he was also their spokesman and their protector.

This position ^{that} Vaudreuil had come to occupy in relation to the colony and the ministry sheds some light on the motives that guided the home authorities in the choice of his successor. If the precedents set by the nomination of Callières and Vaudreuil were to be followed, the post would go to the governor of Montreal, le Moyne de Longueuil. Longueuil had in fact solicited the position¹¹² and there is no doubt that he was well qualified for it. He had many years of experience in Canadian affairs, was a skillful negotiator, and commanded wide respect among the Indians. But he was also a Canadian, and as a result of certain aspects of Vaudreuil's administration the court now appeared reluctant to appoint a man too closely identified with the colony. At about the time of Vaudreuil's death a significant memoir was submitted on the subject by a member of the Congregation of St. Lazare, who had spent some years in Canada.

112. Longueuil au ministre, 21 octobre 1725, AC, C 11 A, vol. 47, pp. 196 - 197; another candidate was Brouillan de St. Ovide, governor of Ile Royale. Le ministre au comte de Peire, 22 janvier 1726, AC, B, vol. 49, p. 11.

Le gouverneur général ne doit point être Canadien ni avoir de parents au Canada, mais être envoyé de France... qui n'ait point d'enfants ni une jeune femme mondaine. Il doit être brave, hardi, populaire et humain avec les François et les sauvages, fier et point du tout endurant avec les François et les Anglois... Il ne doit faire attention qu'à l'honneur du Roy, aux intérêts de Sa Ma'té et à ceux de la colonie... et peu ou point à ses propres intérêts.¹¹³

Viewed against this background, the choice of Charles de Beauharnois, capitaine de vaisseau, appears as the result of an effort to find someone free of colonial connections, someone who would not allow local sympathies to interfere with the implementation of metropolitan policy. Thirty years would elapse before the colony found another Canadian at its head.

113. Moyens pour empêcher les Anglois de venir à bout de leurs vues préjudiciables à la France par rapport à la colonie de Canada, s.d., AC, C 11 A, vol. 47, p. 498.

CONCLUSION

When Vaudreuil became governor in 1703 Canada was going through a period of crisis. The economy was depressed as a result of the collapse of the beaver trade; the West had been disorganized by the abolition of the congés, the founding of Detroit and the withdrawal from Michilimackinac; a state of war existed with the English colonies to the south. Conditions had changed considerably by the time of his death in 1725. The French were then entrenched in the region of the Great Lakes and a coherent defensive policy had been devised against the expansionist designs of New York and New England. Peace and prosperity had also returned. In the first decade of the eighteenth century, for instance, only a handful of merchant vessels had come to Canada. By the 1720's, as many as twenty-five annually cast anchor before Quebec.¹ By that time the colony was transformed in its economy, geography, and western policy and was playing an increasingly important role as an integral part of the French empire.

In accounting for these changes one must begin with conditions in France itself. Approximately the first half of Vaudreuil's administration corresponded to the last years of the rule of Louis XIV. A reign which had augured so well for Canada in the 1660's was now ending on a dismal note. A prolonged war effort had sapped the national energies and the colonies were receiving

1. Renseignement des navires qui sont venus devant la ville de Québec tant de France que des îles de la Méridque [sic] et Isle Royale, 1724 AC, C 11 A, vol. 46, p. 300; same for 1725, AC, C 11 A, vol. 47, p. 308.

indifferent attention. The Minister of the Marine enjoyed little prestige and influence. "Ce qui fait aussi Notre malheur" the abbé Tremblay then wrote, "c'est que le Ministre de la mer n'a presque aucune considération. Il n'est en estat de conduire les affaires dans un train ordinaire, mais dans ces sortes de rencontre ou il s'agiroit de représenter fortement la perte inévitable de toute une colonie, Il n'oseroit prendre cela sur lui, Il parle foiblement ou ne parle pas du tout."² This climate changed after the treaty of Utrecht. With the return of prosperity France devoted a greater part of her resources to the development of a colonial empire. This trend, which already manifested itself in the activities of the Council of the Marine, reached its full development under Frédéric de Maurepas. During his long tenure the affairs of the Marine were finally rescued from the succession of mediocrities who had directed them since the death of Colbert. The Maurepas - Hocquart axis established in 1728 would resemble in many ways the earlier one between Colbert and Talon and yield far more substantial results.

Vaudreuil's twenty-two year term of office includes the final years of the old era of colonization and the beginning of an age with a new outlook and new methods. The character of his administration and his contribution to the history of New France during that time will best be understood if they are considered from the point of view of the three great problems of the War of the Spanish Succession, English expansionism, and Western policy.

Vaudreuil managed to see the colony safely through the

2. Tremblay à Laval, 15 juin 1703, ASQ, carton N, letter 121.

difficult years of the War of the Spanish Succession. Although Canada was never hard-pressed by the English during that period the achievement should not be minimized. There did exist a very definite threat to Canadian security during these years, perhaps less obvious but certainly not less dangerous than that of an English attack. Frequently, the Western Indians appeared on the verge of deserting the French cause or of renewing the war on the Iroquois. As for the latter they continuously sought ways to eliminate the menace of the Western tribes in order to regain their freedom of action. Vaudreuil's main responsibility before 1713 was to maintain the different tribes at peace and to instil sufficient fear of the Western Indians into the Five Nations to oblige them to remain neutrals. By skilfully arbitrating the numerous Indian quarrels that developed during those years, and by threatening the Iroquois with the blows of the Lake tribes if they should stray from the path of neutrality, the governor succeeded in the task. It is true that his tactics were breaking down as the war drew to a close. The Iroquois then realized that the Western Indians were French allies in name more than in fact. At the same time, the tension that had long been building up among the lake tribes was finally erupting into open conflict. Had the cessation of hostilities in Europe been delayed for only a short time beyond 1712 Canada could conceivably have become involved in an Indian war of unprecedented proportions, but the return of peace nullified this danger. While it was this stroke of good fortune that ultimately saved the situation for Canada and Vaudreuil, the fact remains that during the nine previous years peace had been maintained among the tribes and New France preserved from the calamity of a third

Iroquois war. Circumstances, changed from those of the second Iroquois war, obviously had something to do with this. The power of the Confederacy was clearly in decline in the early eighteenth century and for this reason it could no longer wage war with impunity against the French or other Indian tribes. But a good part of the credit also belongs to Vaudreuil and to his able lieutenants. They had understood the nature of the problems confronting the Iroquois during the War of the Spanish Succession and had managed to keep those Indians at a constant disadvantage in the game of power politics that was played between 1703 and 1713.

While the problems that Vaudreuil encountered during the War of the Spanish Succession were difficult, they could still be described as of the seventeenth century type. The main danger had again been an Indian war in which the Iroquois would have played a leading role while New York remained in the background. To neutralize the threat Vaudreuil was not required to innovate diplomatically but simply to make an intelligent use of the political principles he had learned while serving as Commander of the troops and governor of Montreal. Between 1713 and 1725 the climate changed completely as, for the first time in the history of New France, English expansionism became a threat of the first magnitude on both the Eastern and Western frontiers. In coping with this new sort of threat Vaudreuil met with as much success as was possible under particularly difficult circumstances. In both regions the success or failure of English designs hinged on the attitude of the Abenakis and the Iroquois. New England could not

expand toward the St. Lawrence without the consent of the Eastern Indians while New York could not keep the French out of Niagara without Indian support. During nine years Vaudreuil prevailed upon the Indians to resist, at first by threats and then by force, English attempts to settle their lands. The threat on the New York frontier was even more serious since English expansionism in that area aimed at capturing the Indians' trade rather than their land. There also, however, with the indispensable aid of Joncaire and Longueuil, Vaudreuil maintained his ascendancy over the Iroquois and repeatedly foiled New York's diplomacy. In the last years of his life his policy began to fail but, perhaps significantly, it was only after his death that New England managed to quell the Abenakis and that New York succeeded in founding its Oswego settlement.

The problems of the post-Utrecht era had perhaps their greatest impact of all on France's Western policy. Since the days of Colbert the French Ministers of the Marine had always adhered to the compact colony ideal for Canada. Even when the colony was going through its first great period of expansion under Frontenac they had never ceased to proclaim the necessity of concentrating manpower and resources within the main settlement. But while Seignelay was satisfied with paying mere lip service to this doctrine Louis Phéliepeaux de Pontchartrain and his son and successor, Jérôme, particularly, wanted something more. Beginning in 1696 and for sixteen years afterwards a serious attempt was made to translate this theory into actual practice. Like Colbert, however, who had made an exception from the compact colony rule to enable la Salle to locate the mouth of the Mississippi River, Jérôme de

Pontchartrain also exempted Cadillac from the exigencies of the system to permit him to found a settlement at Detroit. While the minister never stated it in so many words he obviously expected Detroit to fit into the imperial policy of 1701 as Louisiana's northern counterpart. But attempting to develop an imperial policy while retaining the essential features of the restrictive system of 1696 soon involved Pontchartrain in a glaring political contradiction. The imperial policy was at first overshadowed by the restrictive one and then abandoned completely in 1708 when d'Aigremont revealed the failure of Detroit.

It was the treaty of Utrecht that revolutionized western policy and changed the course of history in North America. While it is true that the French had reoccupied Michilimackinac as early as 1712 there had been no desire at that time to curb English expansion. The decision to send a garrison and commanding officer to the post was taken simply to maintain peace among the tribes and to place the colony in a better competitive position in relation to the Hudson Bay Company. In fact, it is both important and interesting to note that until 1713 the Canadian administrators thought that the problem of English competition in the interior might best be dealt with not by occupying the Southwest but by withdrawing from it and building strong positions in more northerly latitudes. This recommendation is implicitly contained in d'Aigremont's report and it was endorsed by both Vaudreuil and Antoine-Denis Raudot.

Because the treaty of Utrecht abolished the Iroquois barrier and sanctioned freedom of trade between the English and the Western Indians this policy suddenly appeared obsolete. The Northwest was

no longer the haven it had been when the Iroquois could be relied upon to keep the English from penetrating that area. The Southwest, more than ever before, was also exposed to their diplomacy and infiltration. The new position that the English occupied in relation to the West would alter the policy of the French in a fundamental way. Both Vaudreuil and the home authorities feared that if nothing were done to check the westward pressure of the British settlements the numerous tribes inhabiting the interior would abandon the French cause and probably turn against Canada at the first sign of war. Therefore they decided that it was necessary to occupy the Great Lakes and Mississippi Valley regions in force, to assure the survival of their colony. The only factor that might have checked this movement, the condition of the beaver trade, was removed in 1715 when the metropolitan market recovered from the blight of the previous twenty years. For the first time in the history of Canada expansionism had the unqualified approval of the home authorities and within a period of four years a series of garrisoned posts had sprung up throughout the West. An Anglo-French clash in that region, which might have been avoided as late as 1713, was now almost inevitable. A first major collision occurred on lake Ontario in 1726, between the posts of Niagara and Oswego, and only the existence of peace in Europe prevented war from breaking out in the colonies. The outcome of a second such collision on the Ohio River some thirty years later was not so happy, for it sparked the war that led to the conquest of Canada.

Because of these far reaching consequences, the ultimate soundness of the decision to occupy the West can be seriously

questioned. The advance of the English settlement, far from inducing the Western Indians to defect from the French cause as Vaudreuil and the home authorities feared, would rather have obliged them to seek an alliance with Canada in order to avoid extermination. For the French to realize this, however, it would have been necessary for them to draw a distinction between expansion for trade and expansion for land, and to understand that the second would inevitable follow in the wake of the first. On the morrow of Utrecht this distinction was by no means an easy one to make. English pressure in the West at that time was being exerted largely for commercial ends and was playing havoc with French commerce and French diplomacy. Even in the East, where New England expansionism was clearly for land, the French experienced great difficulty in holding the Abenakis in their interest, so great was the desire of these Indians for the English trade. In view of these conditions, Vaudreuil's fear for the Western alliance can be quite readily understood and his imperialistic policy at least justified by invoking the force of circumstances under which it was formulated.

While the long-term consequence of Vaudreuil's imperialistic policy were unfavorable to New France its short range effects were unquestionably beneficial to the colony. Because the English settlements had emerged as competitors for control of the interior, one of Vaudreuil's main responsibilities was the development of a defensive policy that would enable the French to cope with British pressure in that area. The return of peace made this task more difficult for the governor now had to rely on diplomacy rather than on the force of arms to gain his ends. The manner in which he

managed to defend the threatened areas through the medium of the Indian tribes was a remarkable achievement, despite the fact that the inadequacies of this system became increasingly evident by the mid 1720's. Vaudreuil himself did not fail to notice this. As he realized that the Indians could not be relied upon to hold the English in check he began to think of defending the West by means of war.³ In the eleven years that had elapsed since 1714, when he had told Pontchartrain "que la guerre avec l'Angleterre nous estoit plus favorable que la paix",⁴ the wheel had come a full turn.

In the history of New France the Vaudreuil era is one of transition. It was during the first quarter of the eighteenth century that the problems of an earlier age faded from the scene while those destined to hold the attention of the French until the Conquest began to **emerge**. During these difficult times Vaudreuil had provided New France with bold and intelligent leadership. During ten years of war he maintained the Indian tribes at peace and neutralized the Iroquois threat. The policy he elaborated between 1713 and 1725 showed how France might yet close the fissures created in her North American empire by the treaty of Utrecht. Unfortunately for both the governor and Canada the essence of these contributions was largely negated by the insufficient support he received from the mother country. This is the great tragedy of his administration. During the War of the Spanish Succession

3. See above, p. 286.

4. See above, p. 234.

Vaudreuil was left with forces woefully inadequate to resist a serious assault but, largely by good fortune, he managed to avoid the catastrophic consequences that might easily have resulted from such a situation. While France increased her material support after 1713 it was still not sufficient to enable Canada to do away with its parasitic dependence on Albany when it came to securing goods for the Indian trade. Equally serious was the failure of the home authorities to provide Vaudreuil with the firm diplomatic support he needed to mend the colonial defenses during the post-war years. Indeed, it was largely to France's reluctance to take a firm stand on the colonial question that the English colonies owed their great breakthroughs of the mid 1720's. Vaudreuil himself had built well but the foundations were of sand.

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J.B. NOLIN'S MAP OF CANADA, LOUISIANA AND THE
ENGLISH COLONIES, 1756.



French interpretation of the treaty of
Utrecht boundary stipulations between
Canada and the English provinces.



English interpretation of the treaty of
Utrecht boundary stipulations between
Canada and the English provinces.



Canada - Louisiana boundary.



Boundary of the Illinois country.



Territory contested between Canada and
Louisiana.



Iroquois hunting grounds.



Western posts depending on Canada.



Western posts depending on Louisiana.

FATHER AUBRY'S MAP OF EASTERN CANADA, NEW ENGLAND
AND ACADIA, 1713.

French position on the Eastern Boundary question
between 1713 and 1725

_____ Canada - New England boundary (first solution): from the St. George River southwest to Albany and thence along the Alleghanies.

____ _ Canada - New England boundary (second solution): following the Alleghanies from their origin.

===== Canada - Acadia boundary.

_____ Land of the Norridgewoks, neutral zone.

◇ Jesuit mission.

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